

STUDENT UNREST

CAUSES AND CURE

HUMAYUN KABIR

FOREWORD

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

ORIENT BOOK COMPANY
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Invariably in the forefront of the best students of his generation, always playing very significant role in the students' movements both in India and abroad, Professor Humayun Kabir looked at his own students. And he wondered !

He wondered because, as a poet and a philosopher, he saw a peculiar vacuum in the cultural make-up of the students crowding round him. The old values were fading out but new values to replace them were not taking shape. The students were getting restless.

But he asked himself : Is this the whole truth ?

In the meanwhile, the Professor grew into national eminence. Great responsibilities came to rest upon him. As the educational advisor to the Government of India, he became one that had to give shape to the future of the students of his country.

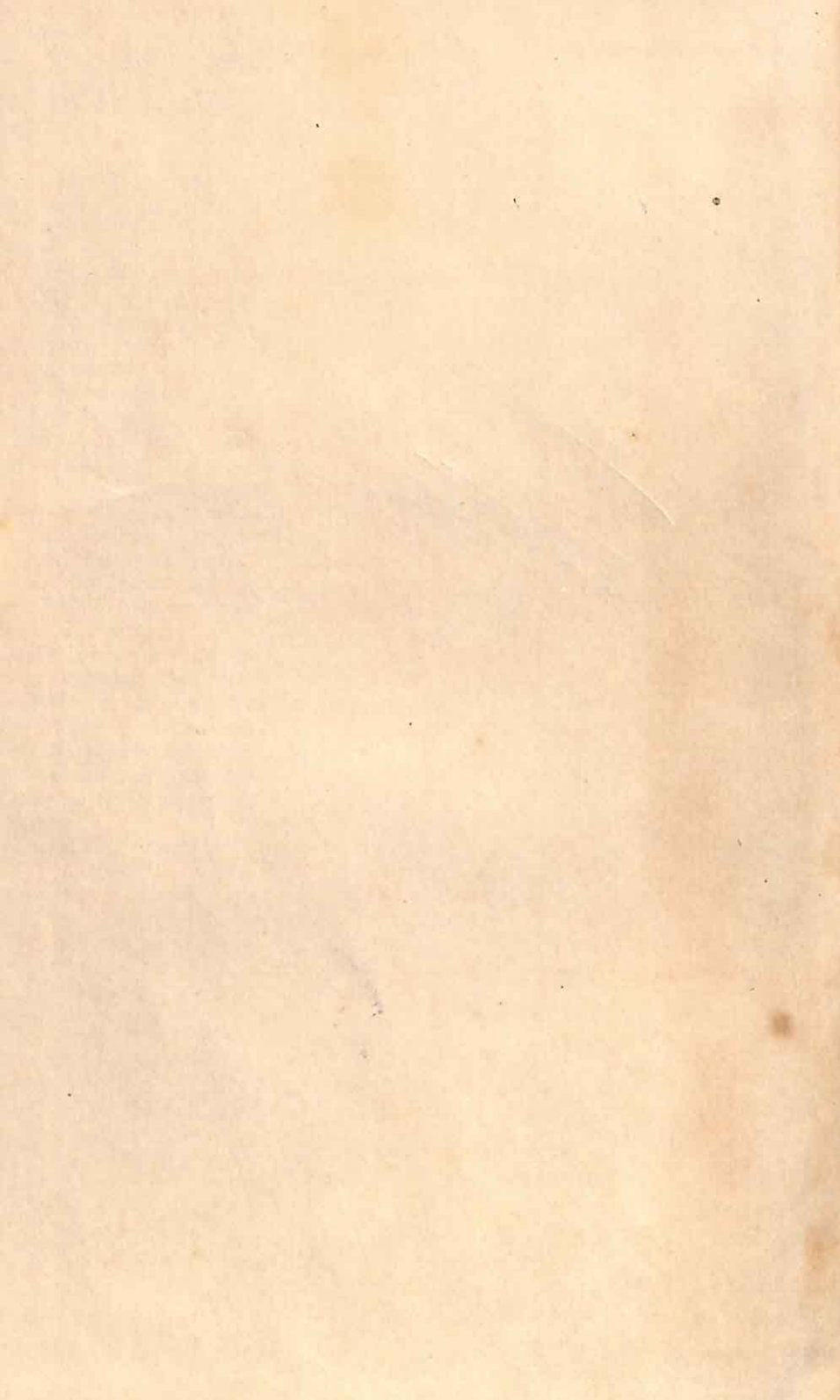
He could no longer afford merely to wonder. He felt the obligation to go into the very root of the problem and this as an essentially practical scientist. As the educational advisor, this is what he owed to his nation.

STUDENT UNREST : CAUSES AND CURE

represents the document of how, after a prolonged and searching analysis of all the aspects of the problem, he has fulfilled the obligation. It is penetrating as any scientific treatise ; at the same time it has the unmistakable flavour of being written by a poet and a philosopher and also one who would never get over either the insatiable love for the student-life or the nostalgia of one's own student days—the days of the glorious National Liberation Movement.

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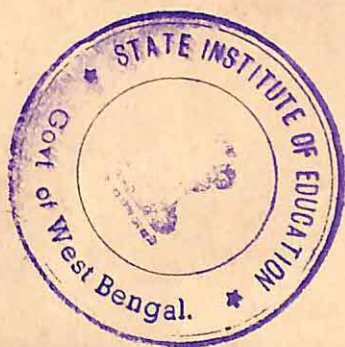
STUDENT UNREST

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By
HUMAYUN KABIR

WITH A FOREWORD

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JAWAHARLAL NEHRU



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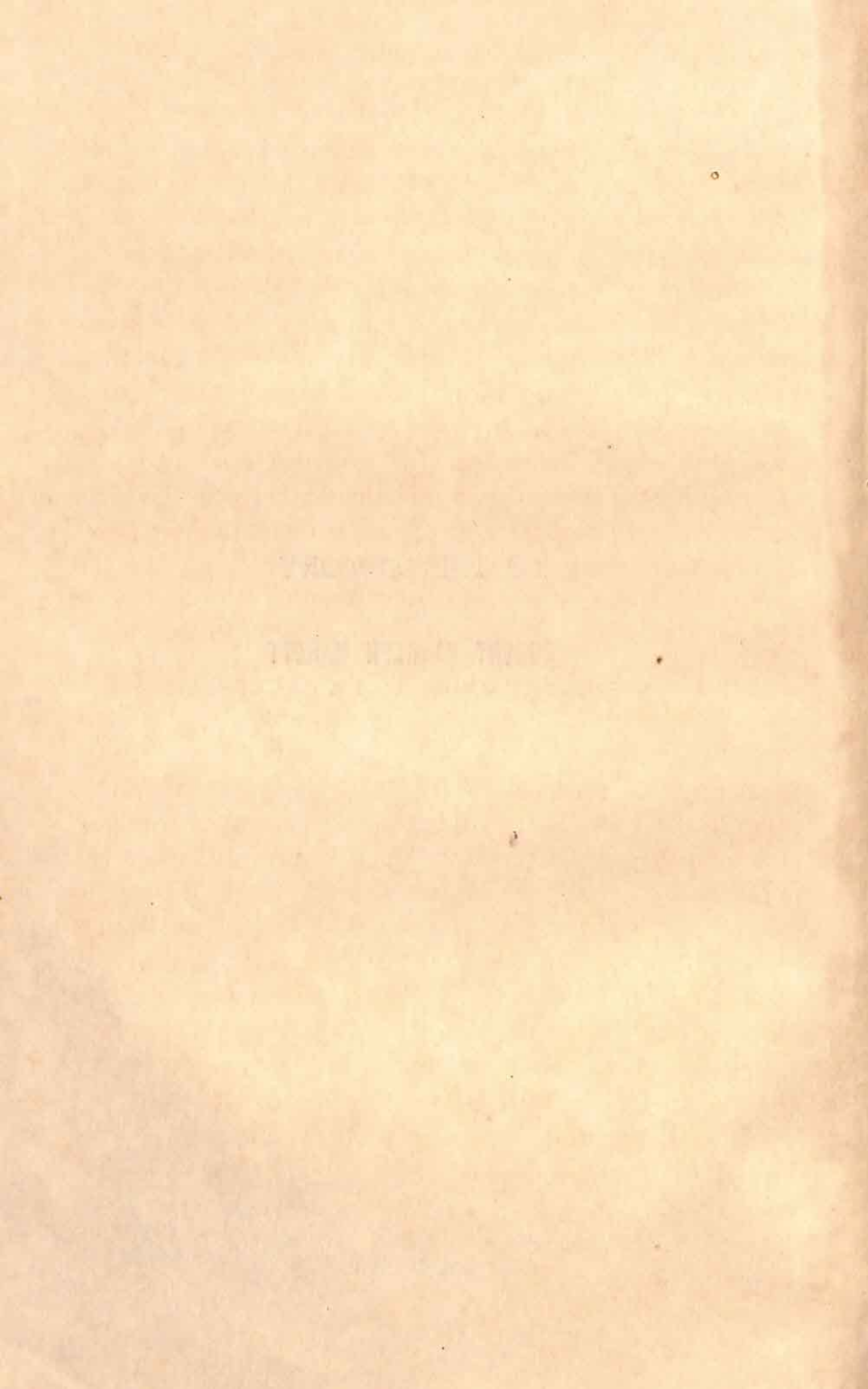
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TO THE MEMORY
OF
ROBERT RANULPH MARETT
A GREAT TEACHER AND A GREAT MAN



PREFACE

One of my first concerns when I became Educational Adviser to the Government of India was to attempt an analysis of the causes of indiscipline among students and suggest measures for bringing it under control. I was clear in my mind that such unrest was at least partly due to the vacuum caused by the decay of old and the failure to substitute new values in their place. There is and must always be a certain degree of disequilibrium in any society. In fact, without such disequilibrium there can be no progress. A sharp distinction should however be made between restlessness which is healthy and maladjustment that becomes a menace to society. At least among a section of the youth of India, the restlessness seemed to have gone beyond the stage of mere disequilibrium and was tending to become a case of indiscipline and maladjustment.

I prepared at the time a memorandum analysing the causes of student unrest and suggesting certain measures for eradicating the causes of maladjustment among the country's youth. This was circulated among national leaders in the field of education in December 1953 and received unexpectedly wide support. On the advice of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the memorandum was presented to the Central Advisory Board of Education in January 1954 and now forms part of its proceedings. After the Board had expressed its general agreement with the stand taken in the memorandum, certain specific proposals were put up to the Government and accepted in principle. Instructions were also issued for their implementation as quickly and as far as possible.

Extracts from the memorandum were published in the Hindusthan Times and the Hindusthan Standard in February 1954. Many educationists in India expressed the wish that it should be published in full in order to reach a wider public. It was also suggested that though the study dealt specifically with India, many of its findings would hold also for other countries. A brochure was accordingly published after amplifying and re-writing some parts and excluding the financial proposals in the original memorandum. If one can judge from its reception by the public in India and abroad, the study seemed to satisfy a real need. Over ten thousand copies of the brochure were used up in India during a few months and there were long and appreciative reviews in journals in countries so widely scattered as Sweden and Australia.

Some months later, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru wrote a letter to the Chief Ministers of all the States on the same subject and desired that this should be followed by detailed proposals on the various issues raised in his letter. A series of letters was accordingly addressed to the State Governments containing concrete and specific suggestions on various matters connected with discipline in schools and colleges. Almost immediately after the completion of the series, I ceased to be the Government's Educational Adviser, but the letters were put together and published as an independent brochure with Shri Nehru's letter as a Foreword. Like the earlier brochure, this also was well received by educational authorities in India and outside.

In response to persistent demands for these two brochures, I am now compiling them in one volume and hope that this will enable educational authorities

at all levels to make greater use of them. I need hardly say that the various proposals in this volume are in the nature of suggestions and will naturally have to be modified to suit local conditions. I have, in formulating my proposals, drawn freely upon hints, comments and suggestions from many colleagues in many fields and I am indebted to all of them for the assistance I have received. I am also grateful to the Ministry of Education, Government of India for permission to publish these brochures as one book and include Shri Jawaharlal Nehru's letter as its Foreword.

It was perhaps appropriate that the last publication of the Ministry of Education with which I was associated in an official capacity was again one dealing with the problem of unrest and indiscipline amongst students. In a sense, all education is a process of discipline. The individual is a bundle of instincts, emotions, urges and impulses which have to be co-ordinated and given a central unity in order to achieve an integrated personality. Society is again composed of individuals and social health depends upon a proper adjustment of the rights and claims of the individuals who constitute it. Education is thus the binding principle which alone can give unity and purpose to individuals and communities,—and ultimately to the community of all men.

New Delhi
August 4, 1958

HUMAYUN KABIR

FOREWORD

New Delhi,
28th August, 1954.

MY DEAR CHIEF MINISTER,

In my fortnightly letters, I have been sending you an overall survey of the internal and international situation, but today I propose to write to you on a specific subject of great importance to the country. You are aware of the unrest and turbulence which has characterised students' activities in different parts of the country in recent years. Sometimes there have been ugly manifestations of indiscipline as in the clash at Lucknow last year or at Indore only a few weeks ago. Very often the violence of the outburst is out of all proportion to its alleged cause. I have been thinking over this matter and I am convinced that the future of the country demands that early measures must be taken to improve standards of education and discipline among students.

2. The Cabinet has recently considered carefully detailed proposals for improving the standards of education and discipline of students. Some of these proposals have financial implications and the Cabinet was of the view that these should be considered only after we have taken a decision on the report of the Taxation Enquiry Commission. There are however, some other measures, mainly non-financial in character,

which can be taken in hand immediately and will go a long way in improving the situation. I would, therefore, request you to consider these measures and take necessary action to see that they are implemented as early as possible.

3. I would, in particular, draw your attention to the following proposals :

(i) Indiscipline among students, the fall in standards and the general deterioration in universities is largely due to the loss of leadership of teachers and the party factions and political intrigues which disfigure academic life. The appointment of the Vice-Chancellor is sometimes made on any but academic grounds. Our Cabinet is of the opinion that legislation should be undertaken to amend the University Acts in order to reconstitute Senates and Syndicates on the lines of the recommendations of the Radhakrishnan Commission. It is particularly important to ensure that the appointment of the Vice-Chancellor is taken outside the sphere of party politics. I would commend to your notice the mode of appointment in vogue in Delhi University as this avoids most of the drawbacks associated with election or nomination.

(ii) Similarly, intrigues and party factions in Managing Committees are a major factor in the deterioration of school discipline. I have asked the Ministry of Education to frame specific proposals for the reconstitution of school managing committees in a manner which would minimise, if not eliminate altogether, political and group influence. I hope you will kindly issue instructions that these when received from the Ministry of Education are carefully examined and given effect to.

(iii) I am sure you will agree that we must take special measures for increasing public esteem for teachers at different levels. I would suggest that you may associate teachers and their organisations to a greater extent in the formulation of Educational policy and see that the social status of teachers is improved by giving them adequate recognition of all State and other public functions.

(iv) Another major reason for student unrest and fall in standards is the undue importance given to the final examination. Students are able to neglect their work throughout the year and cram in the last few months in order to pass and/or get a degree. I would suggest that you might issue instructions for the reconstruction of the system of examination so that adequate importance is given to regular class work in the assessment of the final achievement of the pupil. We might, for the present, confine these changes to internal examinations held by schools and colleges. So far as university examinations are concerned the matter should be examined further and suitable ways and means devised to improve them.

(v) Measures to encourage self-discipline among students must also be adopted immediately. I would suggest for your consideration the introduction of the House System, so that the students may develop a strong group loyalty and come into closer contact with selected teachers. I would also suggest that Councils of Monitors and Juvenile Court of Honours may be instituted in all colleges and schools.

(vi) It is not necessary today to emphasize the value of social activities in shaping the character of

students. I hope you will issue instructions so that special emphasis is laid on the improvement of material and social amenities in school and college life through voluntary labour contributed by the pupils themselves. One great handicap from which students, particularly in urban areas, suffer is the lack of adequate physical amenities in educational institutions. If playgrounds, common rooms, open-air-theatres, swimming pools or gardens could be built or enlarged through student labour this would improve schools and colleges in many ways.

(vii) The value of extra-curricular activities is recognised on all hands, but sufficient measures are not taken to ensure that there is adequate provision for such activities. I would suggest that you may issue instructions for encouraging various types of extra-curricular activities specially in High schools and Higher Secondary schools and universities.

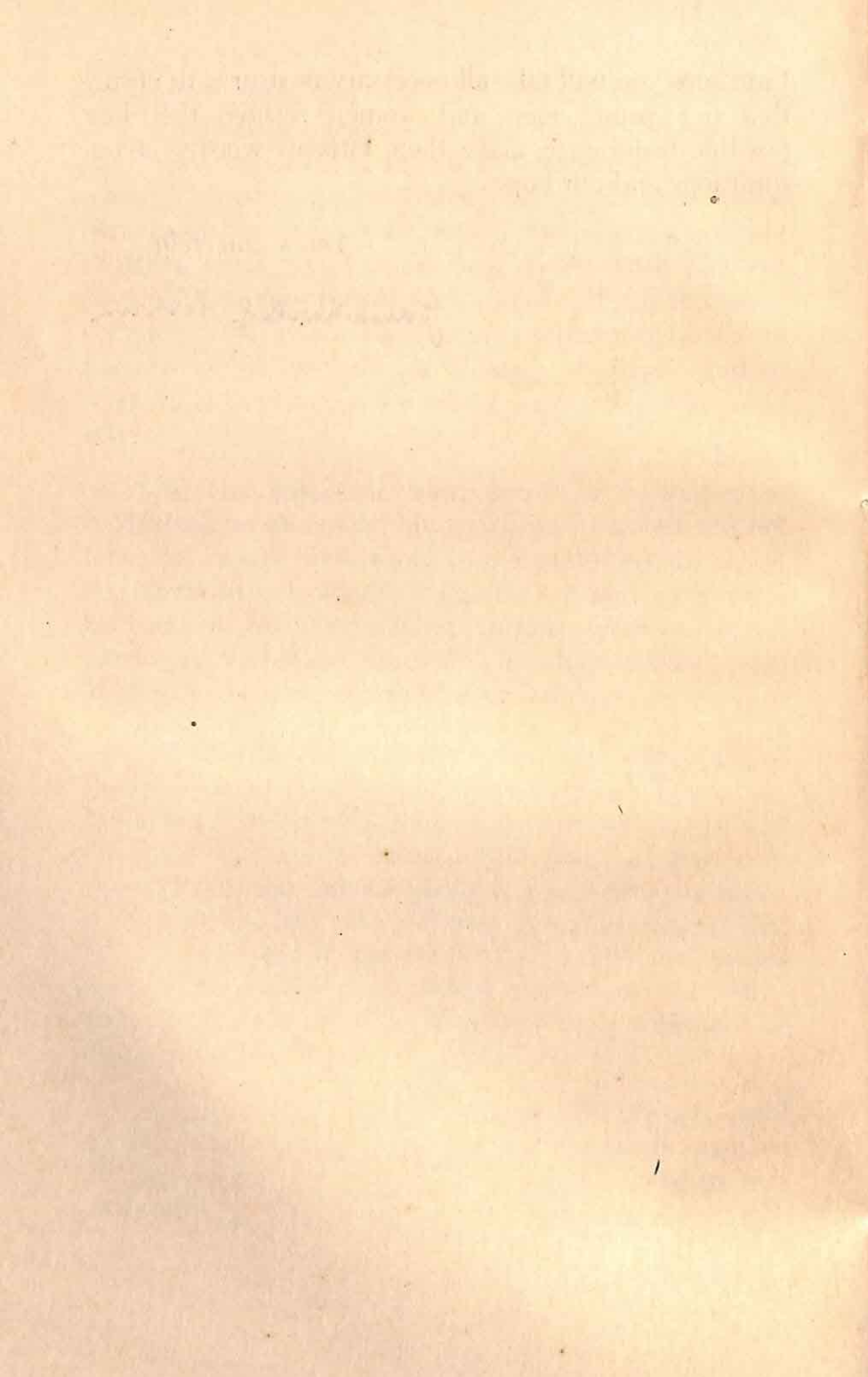
(viii) You will also agree that our education at present is sometimes lacking in a moral or ethical tone. India is a secular State, but this does not imply any disregard for moral values. We have a very rich spiritual heritage but the younger generation are sometimes insufficiently aware of this. I would suggest that an attempt should be made and ways and means devised to introduce an ethical content in instruction imparted in schools and colleges without reference to any particular religion.

4. I am asking the Ministry of Education to send to your Government more detailed proposals on each of these items, but I thought I should write to you personally, as this is a matter on which I feel strongly.

I am sure you will take all necessary measures to ensure that our young men and women receive the best possible training to make them citizens worthy of our traditions and our hopes.

Yours sincerely,

Jawaharlal Nehru



STUDENT UNREST

CAUSES AND CURE

PART I

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There have recently been some instances of grave indiscipline among students that have attracted the attention of national leaders as well as educationists at all levels. In some cases, things have gone so far that teachers in schools or invigilators in examinations have been attacked. In others, there have been clashes with the police or sections of the public. Apart from such extreme examples of indiscipline, there has been a spirit of general turbulence and rebellion among large sections of the younger generation. Some of it is no doubt part of a general sense of unrest throughout the world due to the destruction of old and the failure so far to create a new set of values. There are, however, some special factors in India which contribute to student's dissatisfaction and indiscipline in the country. While the present situation rightly causes concern, the situation is not beyond control and effective measures can restore a more normal attitude among students and the younger generation. On the other hand, failure to take effective steps at this stage can so aggravate the problem that it may shake the very foundations of our national life.

I

It is obvious that before we can adopt effective measures, there must be a correct appraisal of the situation and clear definition of the causes which create the present unrest. An analysis of all the causes would require a volume but some of the factors which deserve special mention may be briefly indicated here.

The Loss of Leadership by Teachers

The first and foremost cause of the present state of unrest among students is to be found in the role the teachers play. Where there is effective leadership by teachers, there can be no problem of indiscipline among students. Unfortunately, teachers today do not command the respect and affection of their pupils to the extent they did in the past. For this they alone are not to blame. The major factors which have led to the loss of the leadership by teachers may be briefly described as follows :

(a) With the steady growth in political consciousness since 1920, students were also drawn into the political struggle. They did not consistently or continuously participate in struggles, but a general temper of revolt against political servitude and a desire to struggle for national liberation became widespread. The personality of Mahatma Gandhi, Mr. C. R. Das, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose and others also powerfully affected the imagination of young students. Teachers

for various reasons were not able to take an active part in the political struggle and to some extent lost the respect and esteem of their pupils.

(b) There has been unceasing and at times sweeping criticism of the prevailing system of education for the last 30 years. From criticism to condemnation is but one step. And the condemnation has extended to the teacher as well. This has shaken the confidence and morale of teachers and induced in the minds of the public a loss of respect for the profession. It has also created among students a disrespect for both the system and the teachers and prevented them from utilising it for what it is worth.

(c) During this period, the teacher has also been continually losing in social status partly for the reasons mentioned above but mostly because of the fact that teachers belong to a lower income level. Thirty or forty years ago, few Indians had the prospect of high Government office. Openings in industry and commerce were also limited. As avenues in other directions opened, a situation developed where mainly the rejects from other professions turned to teaching.

(d) The general desire for more lucrative posts has been reinforced by the difficulties created by war-time and post-war inflation. The salaries of teachers which were in any case unsatisfactory, have now become inadequate even for bare subsistence. Teachers were forced to look for subsidiary income, particularly in the bigger cities. Many old teachers were forced to leave the profession, while young men were loth to become teachers. The result is that teachers today are not only economically poor but often frustrated and bitter men. This not only detracts from their position

in society but makes them positive sources of danger to the community.

(e) The entirely justified demand for expansion of facilities in education has also contributed to a lowering of the prestige of the teacher in two ways. On the one hand, the low income and the demand for a large number of teachers threw the profession open to people who were not qualified. On the other, a disproportionately large increase in the number of students meant that personal contacts between the teacher and the taught were lost. In the past, such contact enabled teachers to win the loyalty and in many cases the affection of their pupils by their qualities of scholarship and/or character. In the new situation, unqualified teachers with little opportunity of personal contact with pupils cannot win the respect of their pupils in either of these ways.

(f) The teacher has little control over even educational issues. The universities, colleges and schools are often controlled by politicians. Even syllabuses and examinations are largely outside the purview of the teacher. Undue emphasis on examinations tends to turn the teacher into a mere agent for preparing pupils for examinations.

(g) Another reason why the teacher has steadily lost his leadership is his acceptance of paid private tuition on an almost commercial scale. There are teachers who give greater time and attention to private tuition than to their work in schools. Cases are not unknown where the teacher is so tired as a result of such private work that he cannot discharge his duties in the school adequately. Besides, the acceptance of direct payment from a pupil or a guardian establishes

a type of mercenary relationship where the teacher becomes incapable of exercising the necessary authority or influence on the pupil.

(h) The factors mentioned above meant a deterioration in the quality of teachers both academically and otherwise. Once the quality of teachers deteriorated, their leadership over the students decreased even more rapidly. A vicious circle has thus been set up by which the loss of leadership of teachers tends on the one hand to keep abler people away from the profession and on the other, because able people keep away, teachers progressively lose their leadership.

Growth of Economic Difficulties

The loss of leadership by teachers would have been a serious problem at any time, but the growing economic difficulties made it even more critical. In spite of the increasing industrial and commercial development of the country and the opening of many new avenues of employment (like the Armed Forces or the higher Civil Services), formerly almost closed to Indians, the general economic distress has been on the increase. This is in part a world phenomenon. The immense destruction of resources and wealth during the War has created conditions of scarcity everywhere. Where countries industrially and economically more developed are in distress, it is not surprising that India should also suffer. In addition to the growth of population, what has made the situation more acute is the refusal of the people to tolerate conditions in which they had formerly acquiesced. This has affected the student community in various ways of which the most important are as follows :

(a) With the rapid increase in the number of pupils, many are now drawn from social strata which cannot provide them with their minimum needs. In the past, the number of students was small and they generally came from the wealthier classes. They did not therefore have to face any serious economic difficulties at least during their student life. As the number of pupils has increased and they are drawn from all levels of society, they have started feeling the stress of economic struggle even during student life. In many cases, pupils have to support themselves partially or wholly throughout their school and college days.

(b) Great as are the economic difficulties they have to face during their student life, even more grim is the prospect that faces most of them at the end of their scholastic career. The majority of students in secondary schools or colleges have no definite plans about their future and do not know what they would do after they have finished. Their education is largely purposeless, and because it is purposeless, it does not fit them for any gainful occupation. Large numbers flow from schools to colleges and universities simply because they cannot think of anything else to do. The result is that a large proportion of the young men and women in the universities are there, not because they have any special aptitude for or interest in higher studies, but simply because they know of no other way of passing the time while they are looking for a job. In many cases, they are not even looking for a job but living in the vague hope that something will turn up. What makes the situation even worse is the higher expectations aroused by entry into institutions of higher learning. The students are no longer content to accept openings which might have satisfied them

after they finished school. Combined with the disrespect for the existing system of education which its constant and sweeping condemnation engenders in them, their lack of purpose and the hiatus between expectation and actuality induce in the minds of the younger generation a sense of frustration which threatens to corrode their character and destroy the very basis of society.

(c) The severity of the economic struggle is thus enhanced by a permanent feeling of financial insecurity. The living the pupils earn during their student life is precarious and uncertain. The prospect that awaits them at the end of their studies is dark and gloomy. The resulting mental stress is aggravated by the miserable conditions in which the vast majority of the pupils live. School and college boarding houses generally provide the minimum amenities but many of the private messes lack even the bare necessities of life. Living in unlovely and congested surroundings, many students develop an attitude of bitterness and resentment which is strengthened by the egalitarian temper of the age. When they compare their own condition with that of a small fraction of the community which is comparatively better off, is it surprising that many of them become rebels against the existing social order ?

Defects in the Existing System

While we must on the one hand resist the temptation of condemning wholesale the existing system of education, we must on the other make every effort to detect weaknesses and take effective measures to remedy them. There is no system of education which is free from defect, but this does not mean that defects

which are discovered should not be immediately removed. There are some features in the existing system which are directly responsible for maladjustments in the student community and create among a large section a sense of discontent and frustration. Among them, only a few which require immediate attention can be indicated here :

(a) The present system of education is overwhelmingly literary and academic. This may be appropriate for a section of those who go for higher education, but it does not offer enough scope to children and adolescents whose tastes and aptitudes point towards an aesthetic, technical or other practical training. While it would be unfair to say that the aim of present day education is to create only clerks, it has to be admitted that it tends to create a bias for a white-collar profession, and many of its products are fit for little else. The system neglects the development of the senses and the physical capacities. It tends to create an aversion to physical labour among the educated who are often lacking in simple manual skills. It is also largely indifferent to the development of character and a sense of moral values among pupils.

(b) The system of education is not fully satisfactory even from the purely academic point of view. Syllabuses are often excellent and if faithfully pursued would develop in the pupils the power of independent thought and balanced judgment. What is in fact generally developed is a tendency to amass information without understanding. One main reason for this is the undue emphasis on and the nature of the final examination. Pupils are judged by the final examination which is more often a test of memory than of

understanding or judgment. As a result, they neglect their work throughout the whole academic year and seek to cram in the last few weeks enough information somehow to get through the final examination. This has various undesirable effects. Since, during the major part of the year, the energies of the pupils are not fully employed, they seek an outlet in various kinds of activities, some of which are definitely anti-social. The present system also encourages a habit of intermittent work so that many of the students become incapable of steady and strenuous effort over long periods. What is even worse, an undue emphasis on the final examination may and at times does encourage a tendency for adopting unfair means as a short cut to success.

(c) The fact that the possession of a degree is an essential condition for employment, whether under Government or in private offices or firms, except at the lowest levels, has aggravated the evils created by the emphasis on the final examination. Students who have done hardly any work throughout the year pin all their faith to the final examination and adopt various undesirable methods to achieve success. Besides, this insistence on a degree induces hundreds, if not thousands, to enter universities who have neither the capacity for, nor interest in higher education. In some cases, they are altogether unable to follow the work which is being done in university classes. The presence of large numbers of uninterested and/or inefficient students not only brings down standards and retards the progress of abler students but also creates fresh problems for the authorities. When students are interested in a subject, there is no problem of discipline in a class. Students who have neither the interest nor the ability to follow lectures tend to gossip and otherwise disturb

the class. This does not remain confined to the classroom. Once they get into the habit of breaking rules in the class, they begin to break rules outside.

(d) The authoritarian character of the existing system of education is also an important factor in the growth of student unrest and indiscipline. This is a reflection of the authoritarian temper of our society where difference of opinion with an elder is often regarded as disrespect for him. The students have little scope for initiative and freedom in curricular or even co-curricular activities, and are generally passive recipients of orders from above. Instead of being a democratic community, the school is often a rigidly stratified society where authority at each level demands unquestioning obedience from those below. So long as the system of education offered a prospect if not a guarantee of employment and thus had a kind of justification in the eyes of the pupils and the parents, its authoritarian structure was not generally questioned. With increasing unemployment among the educated today, it is inevitable that there should be a reaction against past acquiescence. In the case of students and other young persons, this spirit of revolt was aggravated by the atmosphere of defiance engendered by the struggle for independence. Civil disobedience called upon the people to disobey unjust laws, but it was some times difficult to draw the line between just law and unjust. In any case, once students got into the habit of breaking some laws, they developed a spirit of disrespect for all laws. Much of the student indiscipline of today is an aftermath of the part they have played during the days of the national struggle.

General Loss of Idealism

The constant pressure of poverty tends to destroy many of the finer feelings of man. The corrosive effects of prevailing economic distress have been aggravated by a general loss of idealism due to various factors. The course of world affairs in the last two or three decades has encouraged the growth of a spirit of cynicism, avarice and rebelliousness. A few of the major factors may be listed below :

(a) The two World Wars have set in motion a process of general demoralisation all over the world. During these wars, truth was the first casualty. Hatred became almost a religion with large sections of the people. The war saw the rise of a class who grew rich by adopting all kinds of objectionable methods. The hardships suffered by honest men when contrasted with the affluence of the war profiteers tended to lower the general moral standards of the community. Young people could not but be affected by the loss of morals and the prevalence of blackmarketing, bribery and corruption all around.

(b) Apart from a general lowering of standards in the community, the war led to the loss of seriousness of purpose among large sections of the students. During the war years, there was a feverish growth in certain types of business and industry. Government activities were also expanded on an inordinate scale. Large numbers of ill-qualified or unqualified young men found employment in these conditions. In many cases it was the unscrupulous rather than the able who prospered and it became widely held that neither character nor ability nor even hard work was needed for success in life. Is it surprising that students should be demo-

ralised and academic standards and scholarship suffer during the war and its aftermath ?

(c) The spread of a materialist ideology has also contributed to undermine the sense of values by its insistence that the ends justify the means. The communist demand for social justice has an immediate appeal, particularly to the young and holds out before them the prospect of a just social order. This element of idealism in communism makes its indifference to accepted values the more dangerous. In the background of economic difficulties, unemployment and disillusionment, young students are not frightened by the loss of moral ideals or even by the threat to personal freedom, as they consider these a price to be paid for attaining a minimum security.

(d) We have referred to the sense of economic insecurity from which students of the present generation suffer. Even more far-reaching have been the effects of the loss of their social moorings. Old social institutions and beliefs have decayed with the result that the youth of today lack a firm foundation on which to build their life. The joint family was at one time a frame of reference within which the individual could operate. Today, not only has the joint family disintegrated, but all family ties have been greatly loosened. One of the strongest forces for socialising the child has thus been weakened and has not been replaced by any other force. The child is thrown more and more upon itself, and feels uncared for and unprotected. Much of the unrest and indiscipline among students is due to their feeling that they do not belong.

(e) Another factor which marks a change for the worse arose out of the very success of our national struggle. Twenty-five or thirty years ago, the heroes

whom the young people admired were sufferers for a cause. Students then grew up in an atmosphere of idealism where the Congress and the national leaders held before them the challenge of suffering and sacrifice. With the attainment of freedom, the phase of struggle is over and those who were the leaders in the struggle are the leaders in the Government. This is inevitable but it has unfortunately induced a spirit of cynicism in the young, particularly among those who have no personal recollection of the sufferings of our national leaders but see them today in positions of power and prestige.

(f) The low social status of teachers has also contributed to the loss of idealism among pupils. In fact, it has warped their sense of values from early infancy. Children read in books about the respect that is due to teachers and contrast it with the actual state of affairs. This has induced in them a tendency to accept as natural even glaring discrepancies between profession and practice. They have thus come to believe that what is taught in books has no application to life. Plato has described the lie in the soul as the greatest evil that can befall an individual. We have today a community which by its disrespect to the teacher encourages the growth of the lie in the soul in the entire growing generation.

(g) The factors mentioned above have created an attitude of mind where success is the only value that the young recognise. Success is interpreted in a narrow sense and mainly in terms of worldly comforts. The success which demands long endeavour and labour for a cause (like the creations of art or the discoveries of science) is less respected today than the material success evident in the attainment of wealth.

II

Now that we have indicated some of the major causes of the present unrest and indiscipline among students in India, we can proceed to consider measures for eradicating them. Not all of them can be removed at once. The disease has grown over the years and the remedy will have to be a long drawn out process. Also, there is room for difference of opinion about the order of priorities among remedial measures but to my mind a beginning must be made with the problem of the loss of leadership by teachers. This is specifically a problem of education, while the other major causes demand action at many levels. If the leadership of the teacher can be restored, this would in itself go a long way towards solving the other problems. A respected and competent teacher can help to check the demoralisation and cynicism which prevails among students. Once the morale of students has been restored, this is bound to influence every strata of society.

Measures for Restoring Lost Leadership of Teachers

Our first measures must therefore be directed to restore leadership to teachers at various levels. While recognising the need for constant reform, sweeping condemnation of the existing system of education must cease. As already pointed out, such unqualified condemnation has no effect other than to demoralise the teacher and create a sense of frustration among the students. Measures for educational reform can and must be carried on unceasingly but without exaggerating the defects of

the existing system. We must also see that there is no sharp cleavage between teachers, old and new. The new teachers must have faith and enthusiasm in their work, but this should not express itself in the form of aggressive superiority nor must they regard old teachers as educational outcasts.

One of the first measures must be for improving the quality of recruits to the teaching profession. There must also be some relation between the number of teachers and the taught. Till better men are attracted to the profession, no real improvement can take place. At the same time, even the best of men cannot be fully effective so long as there is the present disparity between the number of teachers and students. The number of teachers must be increased, not only in order to improve the quality of teaching but also because of the profound psychological effect it will have on the country. At the elementary level alone, a national system of education would require about 2.7 million teachers. At present the number of teachers in elementary schools is only a little over 6,00,000, so that, given the necessary expansion in education, at least two million elementary teachers could be absorbed in the system. There would be resultant increases in the number of teachers at the secondary and higher levels. Unemployment among the educated is one of the main causes of the present sense of frustration among the youth. If even another four hundred thousand teachers at all levels were employed, educated unemployment would be virtually liquidated. This would create an atmosphere of hope and progress among the youth and bring about a revolutionary change in the psychological climate of the country.

Economic measures are essential but are not by

themselves sufficient for improving the quality of teachers and raising their status in society. There are some who would place the entire emphasis on the improvement of scales. Others think that measures for increasing the professional competence of teachers will solve the problem. Still others hold that an appeal to the idealism of teachers will suffice. It is however only a combination of the three that can give us the desired results. The following measures are suggested at the university level :

(a) Of the many reasons why able people are not today attracted to the teaching profession, two deserve special mention. On the one hand, the spirit in universities has deteriorated and there is lack of a proper academic atmosphere. On the other, the salaries paid are extremely poor and compare unfavourably with salaries paid to persons of commensurate qualification in almost any other profession.

Steps must be taken to restore the academic atmosphere of universities by weeding out political parties and intrigues. Vice-Chancellors and other officers of the university must be appointed on academic and *not* on party considerations. The acceptance of the Radhakrishnan Commission's recommendations regarding the selection of the Vice-Chancellor and the reconstitution of university syndicates and senates would go a long way in removing these evils. The implementation of these recommendations would require the amendment of various University Acts, but would have hardly any financial implications.

Simultaneously, salary scales must be raised, particularly at the initial stages. The national interest demands that a fair proportion of the ablest men and

women in the fields of the humanities as well as science and technology should be retained in the Universities. If the Universities could offer an initial salary which is comparable to what young men can expect in Government service, commerce and industry, some of the best men in their early youth are bound to be attracted to the profession of teaching. Once they are there and have developed an interest of their special fields, the higher rewards which Government Service, commerce and industry offer for the successful man is not likely to wean away except only a few, and these will be men and women who have no sense of vocation for teaching. The conditions of work and employment are so much pleasanter in the universities that once the major needs of life are met, higher pay in other spheres of life is not likely to tempt many away. The experience of British universities justifies such a hope. There are reasons to believe that in India also, some of the ablest among the students can be attracted to and retained in the teaching profession if the initial salary is higher or at least comparable to the administrative services.

(b) In addition to such general measures of improvement in salaries, there must be some special categories of posts for men and women of exceptional distinction. One suggestion is to institute a system of National Professorships which will carry not only higher salaries but also be recognition of high achievement. No university will be entitled to a fixed quota of such appointments for no one will be appointed a National Professor unless he or she is recognised as an authority in the field. Appointment may be in *any* subject on the recommendation of a National Selection Committee. Once appointed, the Professor will hold appointment for life and may teach in any university in India. It is probable

that not many universities will be able to find more than one person fit for appointment as a National Professor. Some will not find even one. Nevertheless, the existence of such posts would inspire university teachers to greater efforts and assure them society's regard for high achievement. One immediate result of the institution of such Professorships would be to stop the drift of able men from the universities.

(c) Another necessary measure is to extend special recognition to teachers who have the capacity to build up the corporate life of the campus. There are even in the adverse conditions of today some teachers in each university who are the friends, philosophers and guides of their students. In many cases, such teachers have an influence not only on the students who are studying in their own departments but on the entire student body of the university. Such teachers, if given adequate recognition, can do a great deal in restoring the leadership of teachers. They can also help in removing the sense of purposelessness and frustration from which a large number of students suffer.

(d) An analogous step is to extend special recognition to the members of the staff who have a special flair for teaching. Everyone of us can remember some teachers who, even if they were not outstanding scholars or researchers in their own fields, possessed a special quality by which they were able to give the students a new enthusiasm in their studies. The power of communication is a most important element in teaching and is not always proportionate to the learning of the teacher. If the aim of a university is both to transmit to the younger generation the knowledge already in the possession of the community and to extend the boundaries of

such knowledge, it is obvious that it must have on its staff both the pure researcher and the pure teacher. There is at times a tendency today to emphasise research at the cost of teaching. Research is certainly important but a teacher should also get recognition for his teaching qualities. It may be difficult to suggest mechanical tests for judging such competence but the judgment of students is often a fairly sure guide. In fact, sometimes the students are better judges of the capacity of the teacher than the teacher is of that of the students.

(e) There must also be provision for higher training of teachers of colleges and universities by creating facilities for specialised study abroad. The institution of special scholarships for the purpose would not only attract a number of able young men to the teaching profession but also help to improve the academic atmosphere of our universities by giving young teachers an opportunity to live in the more scholarly environment of selected western universities. We have to admit that with some honourable exceptions, a majority of teachers in our colleges and universities have lost a sense of dedication. In some of the western universities, this spirit is still in evidence in abundance. Some of these universities have a much better academic atmosphere and have on their staff men who are truly dedicated in spirit. Contact with such men in their early youth is bound to have a profound influence on the future generation of our teachers.

It will contribute to the same purpose if we can secure for each of our universities the services of at least one distinguished professor from abroad for a period of three to five years. The presence of one man can often change the atmosphere of an entire campus. If we choose our foreign professors wisely, they will help both

to raise the standard of teaching and to create a proper academic atmosphere in the university. In fact, the best results will be secured if the invitation to a foreign professor and the deputation of young teachers for study abroad are carried out as parts of an integrated programme so that the young men on return can take up and continue the work which the foreign professor may have initiated.

(f) Improvement in the academic atmosphere and increase in the emoluments of teachers at all levels are essential, but equally important is the need to improve the social status of teachers. It will take long before salary scales can be adequately raised because of financial and other reasons. There is, however, nothing to prevent special measures for increasing their social status. Normally in Government service, and elsewhere, the status of a person is linked up with his emoluments. There are, however, variations to this rule. A junior member of the Indian Civil Service had a higher status than a member of a Provincial Civil Service even when the salary of the Provincial Service man was higher. Ministers today invariably draw lower salaries than members of the permanent services but this has not in any way affected their prestige and social status.

The position of the Ministers may be safeguarded by the political power they exercise. In the case of the teachers, certain special measures would be required for increasing their standing in the community. We must try to recapture the ancient tradition where social prestige had no necessary relation to the economic standing of the individual. In ancient India, learned men were held in honour even if they were poor and it is only in recent times that social status has come to be so closely associated with the possession of wealth.

(g) Of the various measures for improving the social status of teachers, one which has worked well in Turkey may be adapted to our use. Whenever the Turkish Government contemplate any important legislative measure, they appoint a committee of university teachers to examine it from an academic and expert point of view. The Government are not bound to accept the advice of such a committee but the fact that university teachers are first consulted helps to raise their status before the public. The practice is educationally beneficial and politically sound. Teachers are given concrete problems to study and deepen their understanding of reality. The analysis of a problem by an academic body which is comparatively free from political prejudices is an advantage to the Government and enables them to avoid mistakes which might otherwise have been committed under the pressure of political and party passions.

What has been said regarding the need for improving the salaries, social status and professional competence of teachers in colleges and universities applies with even greater force to teachers in secondary and elementary schools. Their salaries are in many cases hardly adequate even for their basic needs. Their social status is a cause for constant concern to all who wish to preserve the prestige of the academic life. In many cases, their professional competence does not satisfy even the extremely low standards prescribed today. Only a few inescapable measures can be suggested in this brief study and I would regard the following as the bare minimum :

(a) The need for revising the salaries of elementary and secondary teachers is the greatest and also presents the greatest difficulty because of the numbers involved.

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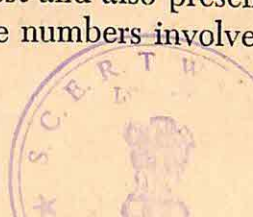
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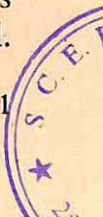
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As against less than 30,000 teachers of all grades in universities and colleges, the total number of teachers in elementary and secondary schools is approximately 8,00,000. Even the most modest measures for improving their economic status would thus involve huge amounts but if we are serious about the future of the country, there is no alternative to finding the necessary funds.

(b) Even more than teachers in colleges and universities, teachers in the elementary and secondary schools require special measures for increasing their status in the public eye. Because of financial reasons, it is unlikely that any improvement in the salary scales that can be carried out in the immediate future would place them among the economically well off. Their demand today is only for an income which will satisfy their basic human needs and free their mind from the constant worry of making two ends meet. In such a context, special measures for increasing their social status become inescapable. The Government of India have recently initiated a step which can add to the status of the teacher at negligible cost to the State. Presidential receptions for primary school teachers were held in the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi. They cost a nominal amount, but the very fact that invitations were issued to men and women whom the villagers have till now regarded as of little importance caused a stir in the countryside. Every State could organise similar receptions and other special functions for secondary and elementary school teachers attended by the Head of the State and its Chief Minister. If the Chief Minister of each State makes it a point to meet a number of secondary and elementary school teachers at every centre he visits, this would help to raise greatly the status of the

teaching profession in the eyes of the general public, specially in the rural areas.

(c) One other measure of great importance in this context is to raise the status of the Headmaster. A good Headmaster can make all the difference to a school. One of the secrets of the great success of the British Public School system is the status and quality of the Headmasters. Thirty or forty years ago there were in India well known Headmasters with Provincial and, in some cases, an all-India reputation. Today it is difficult to find Headmasters who are recognised even throughout one State. One of our immediate measures must, therefore, be to raise the status of the Headmaster. He must not only be given a salary which will attract the right type of person but also allowed wider powers in the appointment and promotion of teachers in a school. In a word, the Headmaster must be the key man in the institution and made fully responsible for its progress and improvement. Once the responsibility for the welfare and reputation of the school is placed squarely on his shoulders, he can be expected to rise to the occasion.

I found that in Japan Headmasters of secondary and elementary schools are given practically the same scale and this is comparable to the salary of executive officers. In Turkey, I found that an elementary school teacher starts on about Rs. 250 a month and goes up to Rs. 500, as against about Rs. 1,100 to 1,500 for a Secretary to the Government. In other words, the ratio between the maximum salary of a primary school teacher and that of the highest administrator is only about one to three. In India, this ratio is sometimes as great as one to eighty.

(d) A great enemy of the quality of teaching at the secondary and the elementary level is boredom and monotony. Teachers tend to lose interest by repeating the same lessons year in and year out. Measures must therefore be taken to break this monotony. The value of in-service training in improving the quality of teachers cannot be stressed too much. In recent years, Britain has demonstrated how even unqualified teachers have been transformed beyond recognition as a result of such training. We must, therefore, increase the provision for refresher courses and in-service training for teachers. One way of doing so is to organise seminars and study camps for teachers at all levels. The All-India Headmaster's Seminar which was held in 1953 under the auspices of the Government of India was attended by 50 Headmasters from 25 States. It did not cost even Rs. 20,000, but has already had considerable effect in raising the morale of Headmasters throughout the country. It has also led to the establishment of the first professional association of Headmasters in India. It was accordingly proposed to continue with such *Camp-cum-Seminars* for Headmasters, and during 1954-55, ten such Seminars would be held in different parts of India with funds provided for the purpose by the Ford Foundation.

A State Headmaster's *Camp-cum-Seminar* on similar lines would cost much less. It should not therefore be difficult for any State to organise two such Seminars every year. This would mean that about a hundred Headmasters of the State would benefit annually. This would help to raise the entire tone of secondary education in the country in the course of a few years. Similar Seminars and Study Camps should also be organised for Headmasters of elementary schools and other teachers.

(e) Refresher courses and in-service training offer welcome breaks in the monotony of the teachers' life. We must, in addition, offer them the opportunity of restoring spiritual and physical health through holiday camps and convalescent homes. Few Headmasters and fewer teachers in secondary or elementary schools can afford to enjoy a holiday because of financial reasons. Yet they are in greater need of such amenities than people of most other professions. Class-room work year in and year out drains the energy and vitality of the teachers. Unless there be breaks which enable them to recuperate, their work tends to become dispirited, lifeless and mechanical. This may result in a permanent damage to the younger generations and must be avoided at all costs. Provision for holiday camps and convalescent homes even on a modest scale would have a most striking effect on the morale of teachers. Such measures would not only make them feel that the community has regard for their welfare but improve immediately the quality of their work.

(f) The Managing Committees of schools must be so constituted as to minimise, if not eliminate, party squabbles and cliques. If elections and intrigues have damaged discipline in universities, their effect on schools has been even more harmful. There are instances where the Secretary of the Managing Committee becomes a petty tyrant over Headmasters and teachers. If elections cannot be altogether avoided in the constitution of the Managing Committees, some method like the election to the Board of Regents in New York State may be adopted. The Board is the supreme educational authority in the State and is elected by the State Legislature. It is still almost totally free from party politics. The reason for this is that of the 13 members of the Board,

only one is elected each year and holds office for a term of 13 years. Since the Governor of the State has a tenure of four years and the members of the Legislature of only two years, the influence of the party on a member tends to be very small after the lapse of one or two years. A similar method of election for the Managing Committees of Indian schools would greatly reduce the party factions and intrigues which so often disfigure the life of the school community.

(g) The evils of the present practice of private tuition must be checked, but this can be done effectively only if the teachers are paid living wages. Even now, there are rules that a teacher cannot accept a private tuition without the knowledge and consent of the Headmaster. There are also rules which regulate the number of private tuitions a teacher is permitted to accept. These rules are, however, more often violated than observed. The usual defence of the teacher is that he must live before he can teach and his wages are not enough to meet the minimum needs for himself and his family. With gradual improvement in the scales of salary, such rules may be more strictly enforced for regulating private tuition by teachers. Till such time as scales are sufficiently improved, it should at least be provided that tuitions must be arranged through and in the school. The Headmaster may be authorised to make arrangements for special coaching of children who are comparatively weak or backward and have the work carried out on the school premises by selected teachers under his supervision. Fees derived from such coaching classes should be divided among all teachers, though naturally those who participate in the programme should be entitled to a larger share. It must all the same be ensured that there is no suggestion of favouritism or

patronage by the Headmaster in the selection of teachers for the purpose. In this way, the present practice of uncontrolled private tuition could be checked and conditions created where teachers devote their entire energy and attention to their work in the schools. One might go so far as to say that even without any other change in the present situation, this one measure—if effectively carried out—could bring about a revolutionary improvement in Indian education.

Measures for Dealing with Economic Difficulties of the Students

The economic difficulties which the pupils face cannot be removed overnight or in isolation from the rest of society. Conditions in academic institutions will remain unsatisfactory till there is general improvement in the economic situation of the community. Nevertheless, every attempt must be made to effect improvements and remove disabilities as far as possible. Some of the measures proposed will require assistance from public funds, but the sums need not be very large. The following specific measures are suggested.

(a) Steps can and must be taken to increase facilities for meritorious students who are economically handicapped. This problem is most acute at the university and college level, though sometimes pupils in secondary schools also have to earn their living. There is at present provision for scholarships, stipends or other concessions for about 15 to 20 per cent of the pupils in schools and colleges. The number of such beneficiaries from public revenues is very much greater in a richer country like Great Britain. In a university like Oxford, over 80 per cent of the students are in receipt

of public assistance in one form or another. Our resources may not allow public assistance on such a scale, but some increase in the present provision is both necessary and possible. In view of our limited resources, we must also consider other methods for assisting students in maintaining themselves. One of these may be to enlist student labour on a much larger scale than has been done hitherto in providing some of the essential school and college services. The U.S.A. offers a shining example in this respect. Many of the students there work their way through school and college by working as bell-boys, waiters, janitors, newspapermen, library assistants and in other capacities. Another means of helping needy students would be to employ them in improving amenities in schools and colleges as described in a later paragraph. We should also consider a revival of the old Indian practice of using senior boys as tutors or monitors for lower classes.

(b) While the educational institutions can and ought to help to ease the financial burden on students, they must also take steps to ensure that students are able to take advantage of the facilities offered. The lack of purpose which characterises so many students today must be removed by better planning of education. To receive elementary education may be an inherent right of every citizen, but in our existing circumstances, the right to education beyond the elementary stage must be earned. There should be a fairly careful scrutiny at the end of the elementary and a much more severe one at the end of the secondary stage. Only such pupils as have special aptitude and interest should normally be permitted to go to colleges and universities. The selection should be done largely by teachers and mainly in the form of advice to their pupils.

There is nowadays a tendency to think of psychiatrists, psychologists and other experts whenever we talk of advice or vocational guidance for pupils. It is doubtful if such luxuries are desirable even for a country which can afford them. It is too much to expect that an expert can give a correct appraisal of a child's aptitudes and tastes by meeting it once or twice for half an hour. The attempt to provide such guidance for all children on a personal basis with adequate observation of each child over a long period would, on the other hand, be beyond the resources of the richest country. In any case, such a programme would be simply out of the question so far as India is concerned.

This need not, however, rule out the possibility of advice and guidance for our children. Teachers who have an opportunity of observing the child throughout the year and sometimes for several years continually are in a position to form a fair estimate of the child's aptitudes and tastes. What is needed is that teachers should establish personal contacts with their pupils. Quite obviously, the success of any such scheme would depend on close co-operation between teachers and parents. If the teachers take a greater interest in their pupils and establish personal relations with the parents, teachers and parents between themselves can give the children the best possible advice for their future career. This may require the introduction of a system analogous to the proctorial system in vogue in residential institutions by which each teacher is made responsible for a number of pupils placed in his charge. In existing circumstances, there is a risk that the system may at times degenerate into petty tyranny and/or surveillance by small-minded teachers, but the risk of such abuse of the

system would be negligible if teachers work in close co-operation with parents and guardians.

If teachers play their role with vision and wisdom, adoption of such a system would have the double advantage of helping to restore the leadership of the teacher and of diminishing, if not eliminating, the present purposeless drift of adolescents into colleges and universities. By controlling the quality and number of entrants into higher education, it would also reduce the gap between expectation and attainment which is responsible for much of the frustration among the youth of today.

(c) The economic difficulties of students will not, however, be solved overnight. Nor will the institution of advice and guidance by teachers and parents immediately succeed in diverting all students into channels of education or training for which they are specially suited. The improvement of amenities in schools and colleges is therefore an immediate *must*.

We may deal with self-help programmes first. Construction or improvement of play-grounds, stadiums, theatres and gardens and in the case of older pupils, the building of schoolrooms or hostels should, wherever possible, be undertaken under the leadership of teachers. That this is not impracticable is proved by the experience of voluntary organisations in different parts of the country. Special mention may be made of Bhau Rao Patel of Rayat Sikshan Sanstha of Satara who has constructed buildings for one college, four training schools, many high and primary schools and some hostels almost entirely by the labour of the students who live in them.

The enlistment of student labour under the leader-

ship of teachers for improving basic material amenities in educational institutions will have various advantages. It will help to ease the struggle for such pupils as have to maintain themselves by offering them the opportunity of earning at least part of their keep. It will also help to improve the physical environment in which they live and which, as already pointed out, is a major factor in creating a sense of bitterness among them. It must be recognised that playgrounds and gardens, assembly halls and rest rooms and libraries and reading rooms are essential to a school if it is to serve as a centre of community life and contribute to the allround development of the child and the adolescent. In addition, such programmes will enable the teachers to come into closer contact with their pupils and open to the pupils creative channels for their energy.

Apart from such self-help programmes, schools and colleges may also initiate and assist projects where paid student labour can add to the wealth of the community. Examples which come readily to the mind are projects of local bodies or non-official organisations for the provision of social services like night schools and health centres or of amenities like public gardens and parks.

The State should also take steps to supply tiffin to school children either free or at nominal prices. School lunches have done more for the improvement of morale among pupils than almost any other single factor in both the U.K. and the U.S.A. A nominal charge may be imposed but the Principal or Headmaster should have the discretion to allow free lunches to at least such of the pupils as cannot pay. Wherever possible, students should work for the free supply of lunches. The Basic system offers the hope of contribution by the children

to school funds. There can be no better use of such contribution than to utilise it for providing meals to the children themselves. If there be any surplus, the funds may be utilised for giving them simple school uniforms.

Removal of Defects in the Existing System of Education

Large-scale reconstruction of the existing system is bound to take time. Besides, such reconstruction will be a continuing process, as there can be no finality in a living function like education. Some of the more obvious defects can and must, however, be removed immediately in the light of our earlier analysis. The following points may be specially mentioned :

(a) Both the University Education Commission and the Secondary Education Commission have suggested reconstruction of secondary education in order to meet the requirements of adolescents of diverse tastes and aptitudes. Elementary education may be uniform in character, as the main purpose of education at this stage is to give the child an essential body of information and to develop in him certain habits of thought and action. With the coming of adolescence, differences in taste and aptitude begin to be clearly marked. Secondary education has therefore to be more diversified. During 1954-55 the Government of India initiated a scheme for the conversion of 500 existing secondary schools into multipurpose higher secondary schools. It is expected that with greater variety of courses at the secondary stage, an increasing number of adolescents will be diverted from purely academic studies. This will help to relieve the pressure on the universities. It will also help to remove one of the chief causes of the

sense of discontent and frustration among young men and women by providing gainful occupation to many at the end of adolescence.

(b) Along with these changes in the structure of the curriculum, steps must be taken to provide for the physical and moral education of pupils. For students in colleges and universities, membership of a body like the National Cadet Corps is important, not so much from the point of view of military training, as for its value in developing the physique and inculcating habits of regularity and discipline among young men and women. The ultimate aim should be to make such training available to all students who desire to have it, but this may not be easy of realisation because of the finances involved. Facilities should, however, be so enlarged that all such students get at least one year's membership of the National Cadet Corps.

In view of the cost of the National Cadet Corps, a simplified form of service and physical education for all able-bodied students may be instituted. The cadets trained in the N.C.C. may serve as the leaders and instructors for such courses, thus reducing the cost of the scheme and offering the trained cadets the opportunity of exercising leadership. Such courses may be made available to all students who desire to join the Corps. In addition, every student free from physical defect may be required to satisfy a minimum standard of efficiency in various types of physical tests. Insistence on better physique of students as part of their academic routine would help not only in improving discipline but also in giving them more buoyance of spirit.

For school children, scouting and guiding offer excellent opportunities of developing character and

initiative. They not only provide a healthy and useful outlet for the energies of the children but make them more self-reliant and resourceful. They also help to develop in them a spirit of service to the community. Without making participation in such activities compulsory, facilities should be so expanded and membership made so attractive that hardly any children are left out.

(c) Along with the diversification of courses and increase of co-curricular activities, it is necessary to reconstruct the existing system of examinations. At present, there is undue emphasis on the final examination with the result that the energies of the adolescents during the major part of the year are largely unutilised. Much of the present unrest and indiscipline among students will disappear if they are compelled to work steadily throughout the year. The demand of continuous application to work would drain superfluous energies and leave little scope for mischief. It would also encourage in them habits of steady work and development of such habits is one of the major purposes of education. Reconstruction of the system of examination by which the worth of a student would be assessed after taking into consideration the record of his work throughout the year as well as his performance at the final examination would thus bring a new discipline into the life of the majority of the students.

(d) It is also necessary to modify the prevailing modes of classroom teaching in both schools and colleges. What generally happens now is lecture or discourse by the teachers with the pupils as mere passive listeners. Because pupils are not required to be active, their attention is prone to wander, particularly if the teacher or

the subject is heavy or dull. From inattention to indifference is but one step. Once this happens, the basis of discipline in the class is shaken and it is not long before there are outward manifestations of indiscipline. It is now universally recognised that children in elementary classes should be given activities which will keep them engaged and arouse their interest in classroom work. Similar results may be obtained by introducing tutorials, seminars and discussions in the case of older pupils. Where they have to participate actively in the work of the class, the discipline of work develops their character and makes them better members of the school community.

The method of teaching now commonly used entails more work for the teachers than for the pupils. If the burden of lectures and discourses is lightened, the teacher can supervise the work of pupils more effectively. A fully developed system of tutorials and seminars would demand an appreciable increase in the number of teachers and may not therefore be financially feasible in the near future. Two devices would, however, help in reducing, if not overcoming this difficulty. One is to cut down the number of hours given to lecture or discourse and use them for supervising the work of groups of pupils. The other is to use senior or abler pupils to supervise some of the work of younger pupils. These two measures, if used in judicious combination, would also reduce the size of a class and thus enable closer contacts between teachers and the taught. By calling for greater effort and initiative on the part of the pupils, it would also improve the quality of the education they receive. Simultaneously, it would enable the teacher to pay greater attention to pupils either individually or in small and manageable groups. A shift in

the emphasis from lecture or discourse by the teacher to activity of the pupils would thus overcome one of the main weaknesses of the existing system of education.

(e) The present insistence on the possession of a degree for employment except at the lowest levels must also go. The example of Great Britain has shown that a sufficient number of able persons can be recruited to the public services without insisting on a degree. In fact, the dissociation of a degree from employment has had a beneficial effect in the U.K. on standards of both universities and services.

Abolition of this condition would in another way help to improve the general atmosphere and have a direct bearing on the problem of discipline. In Great Britain, recruitment at various levels of service is based on age. The result is that a fair proportion of young persons have already been absorbed in various professions and avocations by the time they are 19. They receive further training in their own special lines after they have been definitely fixed up with jobs. The small numbers who continue with their studies do so either with a view to higher learning or in order to qualify themselves for professions which require a higher degree of technical or scientific knowledge. The introduction of such a system in India would immediately draw away from universities and colleges large numbers who are there without any purpose and are often quite unfit for higher education.

(f) There must also be a greater democratisation of the school atmosphere so that pupils have a greater sense of freedom and initiative. The mentality of defiance which has grown up in recent years among large sections of the youth is partly due to a reaction

against their former blind acceptance of authority. If students are denied freedom within their own limited sphere, is it surprising that when the supervening forces are removed they should at times break out into license? Where students find modes of self-expression in sports or cultural or academic activities, the revolt against authority is never so marked or serious. Where students are deprived of normal and healthy outlets for their various urges for freedom, they tend to resort to activities that are unsocial or anti-social. Discipline grows out of a sense of responsibility and the sense of responsibility grows only out of the exercise of responsibility.

Among measures offering greater self-government to pupils, special mention may be made of the system in which the school is divided into Houses. Each House is again divided into a number of classes. In each class 20 to 25 children are placed in charge of a teacher who is assisted by one or more monitors. In choosing monitors, character is given even greater importance than academic distinction. These monitors are given considerable responsibility in maintaining discipline in the classes. We should adopt the system with such modifications as local conditions may require. Further, the monitors of different classes should together constitute a Council of Monitors for maintenance of discipline in the school as a whole. The Principal or Headmaster should recognise these monitors as leaders in their respective classes and the Council as the collective leadership of the school. With some minor modifications, the system should work even better in a college or university.

The Council of Monitors may also constitute a Juvenile Court of Honour. It is common experience

that if children are put on their honour, they refrain from indiscipline and other undesirable acts. The system of Honour should be developed from the earliest classes right up to the university stage.

There is another important reason why pupils must be given the opportunity of expressing themselves in diverse ways. Trial and error is the instrument through which life teaches us its most important lessons. It is better that these experiments of trial and error should occur in a sphere where error may not result in grave danger to society. If students are given a greater share in the governance of their own affairs, it will have a three-fold influence in restoring the sense of discipline and responsibility they have so largely lost during the years of political struggle. It will keep them busy and engaged and employ their energies in useful activities. It will train them in the art of citizenship and self-governance so that in later life they may avoid mistakes which would otherwise damage the structure of society. Most important of all, in carrying out tasks they impose upon themselves, it will bring to them the joy of self-realisation.

Measures to Revive a Sense of Values among Students

We have already referred to the fact that student unrest and indiscipline is a part of the general malaise of society in the modern world. If we complain of lack of idealism among large sections of the youth, this is a reflection of society's loss of the sense of values. Students are an integral and perhaps the most sensitive section of the community. It is obvious that we cannot expect a strong sense of values among them, if the general temper of society is sordid and mean. This only

throws into sharper focus the fact that education is a social function and must improve or deteriorate with the improvement or deterioration of society in general. If we are to revive a spirit of idealism among students, we must create a social atmosphere where values are held in high respect and students feel an urge towards realising them. It is thus largely a question of restoring a sense of values in the community itself.

It cannot be reiterated too often that the lowering of the social status of teachers tends to warp our sense of values from infancy. This is in fact one of the major reasons for the loss of values among the younger generation. The actual plight of the teacher is a standing denial of what is theoretically accepted to be his due. The glaring discrepancy between theory and practice undermines the students' basis of faith. Even more damaging to their faith is the conduct of disgruntled teachers. Nowhere is it truer than in the case of the young that "example is better than precept". The example of disillusioned, disaffected and impoverished teachers serves to bring down the standards of conduct of pupils and therefore of society. If the measures we have recommended for improving the status of the teacher and restoring his leadership are carried out, one of the major reasons for the decay of idealism among students will disappear.

Once the status of the teachers has been restored, it may be expected that the profession will regain its sense of values. We can then think of measures which will induce in the pupils a sense of their obligation to society. In all countries, students are maintained by the effort of others and draw their sustenance from the wealth of the community. In a country like India, where our per capita annual income is not even Rs. 300,

a school pupil costs the community not less than Rs. 500 to Rs. 600 a year, while a student in a college or university costs much nearer a thousand. Since pupils contribute hardly anything to the production of social wealth during their tutelage, this means that the per capita income of three persons is required to maintain a school child. Similarly, the cost of maintenance of a college student amounts to the per capita income of four or five persons. This fact imposes on all students a special obligation. On completion of their studies, they must seek to return to society more than they have consumed. If they cannot do this, they must at least compensate society for what society has spent on them.

One of the ways of inducing in students a sense of their obligation to society is to encourage them to associate with various types of projects for the upliftment of the community. With the advent of adolescence, they should learn to realise that education is a great privilege which society offers to them and they must, consistent with their primary duty of preparing for future citizenship, try to pay back some of their debt to the community. Various types of community services may be developed with the active participation of students. In some countries, colleges and schools have adopted a neighbouring village and worked for its improvement in various ways. In others, students and other young persons have contributed directly to programmes of national development and construction. In India, programmes of reconstruction of national life, whether in the form of community projects or national extension service or the provision of essential services like education and sanitation offer a splendid opportunity to the young.

We have referred to the aftermath of the World Wars and the spread of a materialist ideology all over the world. While their invidious influence cannot be denied, we should not ignore the capacity for devotion and sacrifice which the experience of war has evoked among millions. The end of the first World War saw young men dream of peace based on justice, equality and liberty. The end of the second World War has brought freedom to vast numbers and made the ideal of social justice part of the texture of civilised society. In any case, we must remember that idealism is the most marked characteristic of adolescence. There is at this stage of life a sudden upsurge of emotions and young persons are prepared to face any risk for the sake of an ideal. Hardship and danger have a special appeal to the young and if the right ideals are placed before them, there are no heights to which they may not rise.

One word may be said here about the role of religion in creating a spirit of idealism among the youth. Religion resolves many of the conflicts which paralyse thought and action. It releases energies that recognise neither difficulties nor defeat. Religion not only permits but encourages identification with forces greater than one's own self. It thus enables the individual to transcend the bounds of avarice and selfishness. It is only when religion gets entangled with dogma and ritual that it becomes a limiting factor and cause of friction among men. In its wider aspect of liberation of the individual from the bondage of self, religion is one of the greatest forces for the upliftment of man.

Since it is during adolescence that the mind is most ready for identification with a higher cause and willing to sacrifice everything for its sake, it is necessary that

pupils must not be denied the liberating influence of religion in this wider sense. Shorn of ritual and dogma, it will express the great human ideals which form a universal ethic for all men. Unless students are brought into contact with these great ideals of man, their lives will remain impoverished and meaningless.

One way of doing this is to organise a daily Assembly in schools and colleges where all students may get an opportunity of sharing in the riches of man's common heritage. To gather together for a few minutes, even if it be in silence, reminds the pupils of their common membership in academic life. The Assembly is thus valuable in itself, as it imposes on all the discipline of participating in a common experience. In addition, through common worship or the reading of great texts, it offers them an opportunity of coming into contact with some of the higher values of life and recognising the basic unity of human ideals and aspirations. It is a general experience that schools and colleges which have an Assembly are invariably marked by a better discipline and fellowship among their pupils.

Realisation of the basic unity of human ideals will also make it easier to carry out a programme of reorientation in the study of our history and national traditions. Much of the conflict and bitterness in the modern world is due to a wrong teaching of history. Till very recently history has been regarded as little else than a record of war and conquest. Men and nations have therefore been judged, not by their contribution to human welfare, but by their success on the battlefield. Even national traditions have been used as instruments of national chauvinism and national pride. Individuals and nations have taken inordinate pride in military victories and forgotten

that wars invariably lead to a lowering of at first material and later ethical standards.

If wars have in the past retarded human progress and, led to social deterioration, they threaten the very survival of man in the context of the modern age. It is therefore a matter of urgency that students today should get a better perspective of the world and realise that the history of man is an age-long march towards greater light, freedom and sweetness in which men and women of different nations, countries and ages have co-operated, consciously on some rare occasions, but more often without being aware of their common goal and common endeavour. Men have been more sensitive to the struggle and competition on the surface than to the far-flung co-operation which lies at the basis of human progress, but they must now learn that it is only a half truth that the struggle for existence is the law of life.

If competition has at times furthered the cause of progress, co-operation has been basic to the survival of the species. This is particularly true in the case of man. With his weak senses and low physical powers, he has yet triumphed over the rest of creation only because he was able to co-operate on a scale unknown to any other animal. This he has been able to do because of language. Speech gave him the power to communicate with a precision and over an area of experience which is unique. Since language is a social heritage that is transmitted from one generation to another through education, teachers owe it to Society to emphasise the element of co-operation implicit in all communication through language.

We have already pointed out how cynicism and loss of ideals among the young is due to their sense of

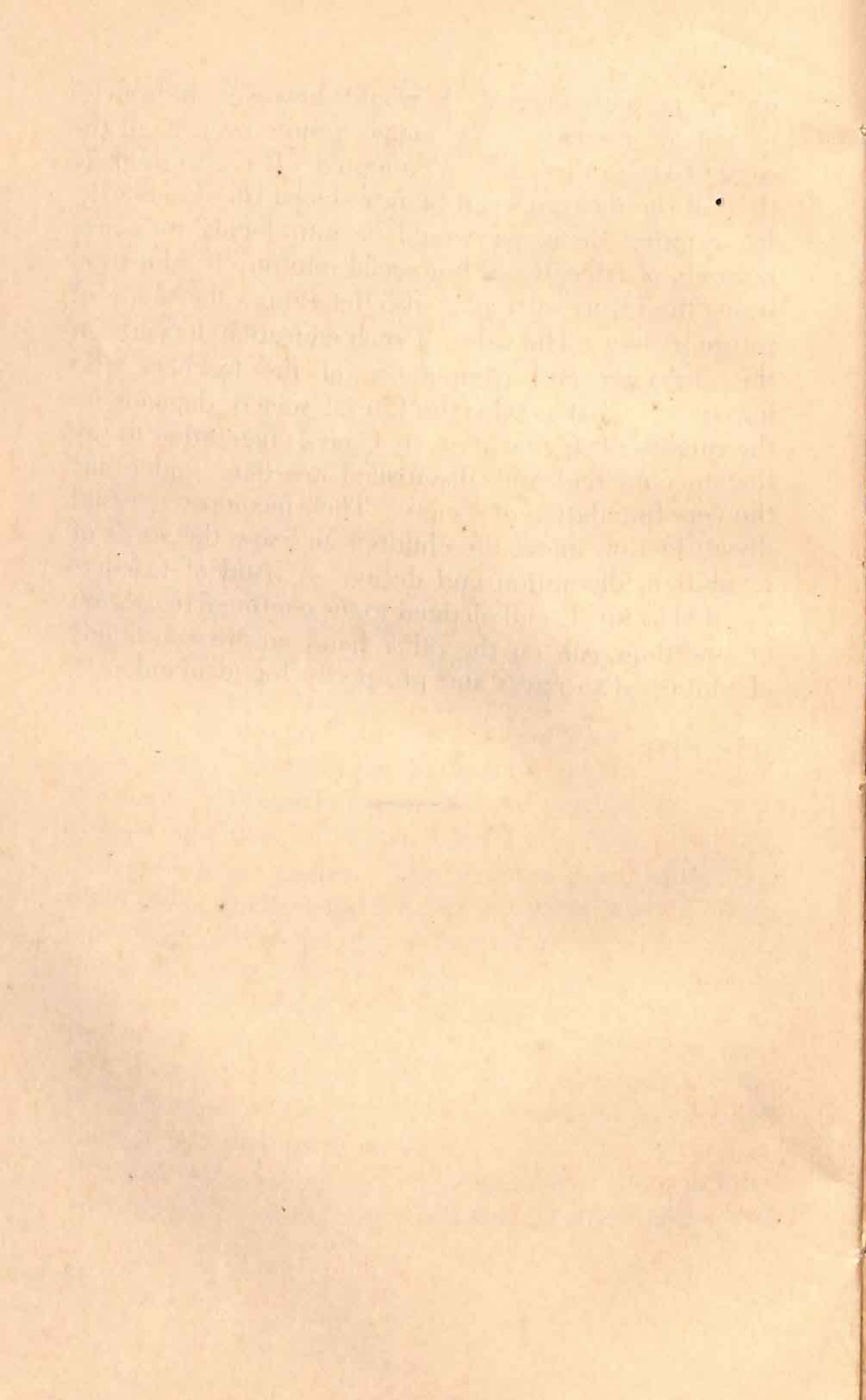
economic, social and psychological insecurity. We have also indicated some of the measures necessary to eradicate the sense of insecurity from the minds of the young. Closer mutual contacts between teachers, pupils and parents will go a long way to develop a sense of community in the young and to make them feel that they belong. Once the young have this feeling, they would not suffer so much from the sense of purposelessness which today baffles them. Even if the system of joint family has decayed, co-operation between teachers and parents may safeguard for the child some of the values which were formerly provided by that system. Emphasis on co-operation in society must not stop at abstract relations between groups, but cover also the day-to-day contacts between individuals of different age and relationship. If the youth of today can feel that the tradition of their forefathers is something which is living and growing, their sense of not belonging will vanish.

An essential condition for revivifying traditions is to recognise the inevitability of change. One of the major reasons for the youth's loss of social direction is the mental distance between different generations. Each generation clings to its own ideas and refuses to accept any growth or change. The younger generation with its different background and environment is out of tune with the ideals of the old. If, therefore, the older generation recognises that its ideals must be adapted before they can be adopted by the coming generation, one of the major reasons for clash between fathers and sons will disappear. Along with this will disappear much of the restlessness and loss of values which characterise the younger generation of today.

The several measures suggested above will go a long way towards solving the problem of indiscipline and

unrest among students. It would, however, be unwise to expect immediate or magic results even if all the suggestions in this study are adopted. It is also unlikely that all the measures can be introduced simultaneously. In adopting them, we would be introducing measures not only of educational but social reform. If education trains the future citizen, it also determines the shape of future society. The value of such education depends on the character and competence of the teachers who impart it. That is why the fate of society depends on the quality of its teachers. It is no exaggeration to say that incompetent and dissatisfied teachers undermine the very foundation of society. Their incompetence and dissatisfaction infect the children and sow the seeds of revolution, disruption and decay. A band of teachers devoted to ideals and pledged to the continual recreation of traditions can on the other hand ensure conditions of unlimited progress and prosperity for mankind.

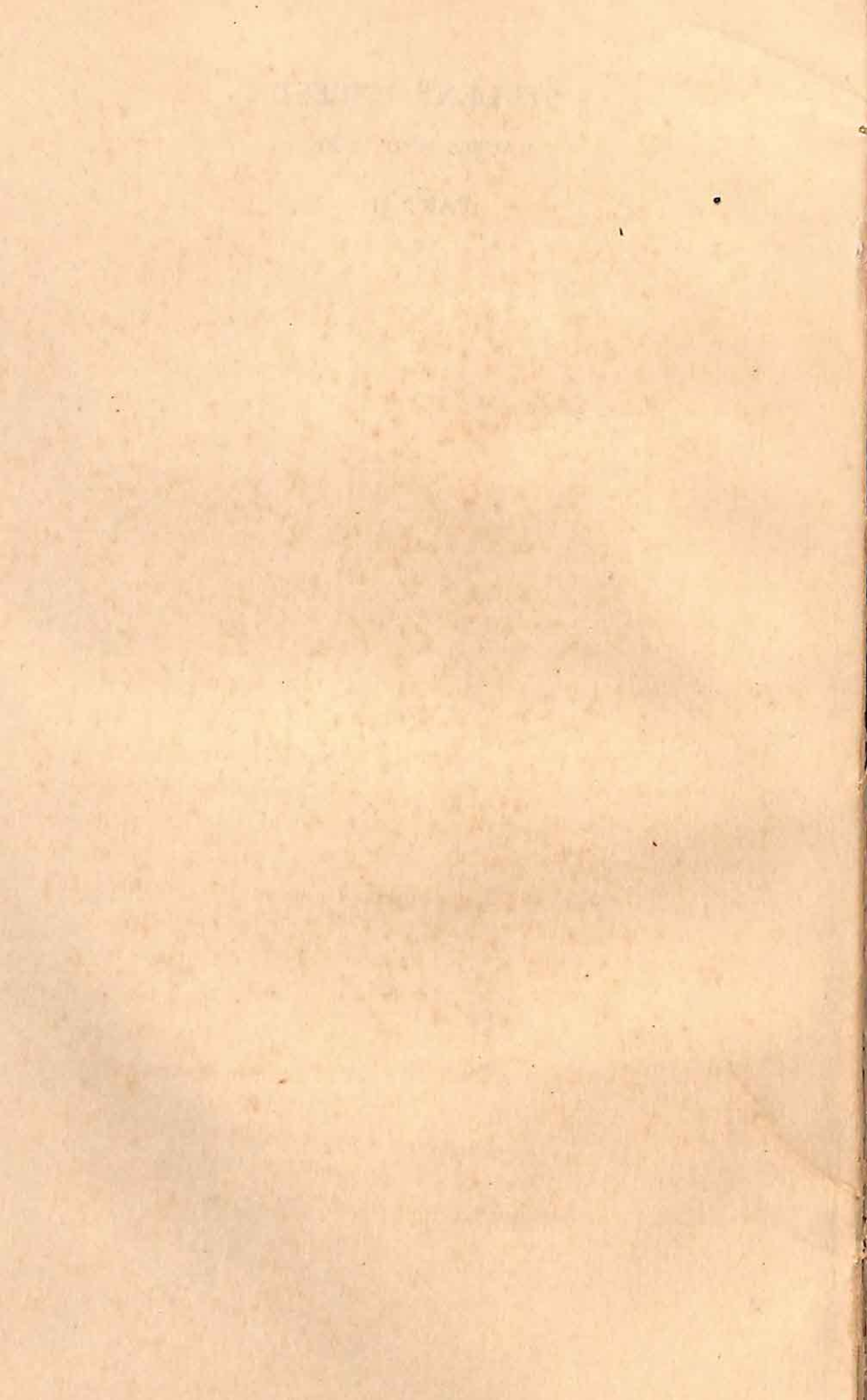
July, 1954



STUDENT UNREST

CAUSES AND CURE

PART II



NEW DELHI,
28th September, 1954.

MY DEAR MINISTER,

I am writing this in accordance with the direction contained in the Prime Minister's letter dated the 28th August 1954, addressed to Chief Ministers of all States.

The Prime Minister has in his letter endorsed the Central Advisory Board of Education's analysis of the causes of indiscipline among students and given his general support to the remedies recommended by the Board. You will no doubt agree that we have to attack this problem at various levels of which perhaps the most important is the Secondary stage. The Secondary schools supply teachers to Primary schools and students to colleges. Also, boys and girls in their early adolescence are more liable to emotional disturbances which at times express themselves in acts of indiscipline. Further, State Governments can, through the Directorates, have an immediate influence upon Secondary schools. It may, therefore, be wise to make a beginning with Secondary schools and take measures for improving their general tone and discipline.

One of the major recommendations of the Board dealt with measures necessary to check the corroding influence on school discipline of intrigue and party factions in the Managing Committees of schools. If school discipline is to improve, these Committees must be reconstituted so as to minimise, if not eliminate altogether, political and group influence.

In this letter I wish to make certain suggestions for the reconstitution of Managing Committees. In view of the special relevance of these proposals to the question of school discipline, I am sure your Government will accord them the closest attention and take in hand their implementation, if necessary with local modifications, without delay.

One of the common handicaps from which many school managing committees suffer is its large size. It is extremely important that the size should be suitably restricted to enable the committee to function expeditiously and in a businesslike manner. I would like to suggest that in no circumstances should the size of a managing committee exceed 15.

Another defect from which many of our school managing committees suffer lies in the constitution of such committees by election on party lines. This exercises a most undesirable influence on the entire working and discipline of schools. It seems essential, therefore, that as far as possible the practice of elections should be eliminated from this sphere. I would accordingly make the following suggestions in respect of the constitution of managing committees.

1. About one-third of the members may be from among donors and regular subscribers. The appointment of these would be by rotation in the manner to be determined by the Director of Education.

2. About one-fifth of the members should be nominated by the President of the Board of Secondary Education to be selected on the joint recommendations of the Headmaster and the District Inspector of Schools. In case the President of the Board of

Secondary Education is different from the Director of Education, one of these nominations should be made by the Director of Education and two by the President of the Board. The functions of these nominees, who should be chosen on the basis of experience or special knowledge of Secondary education, would be largely advisory. Their presence is expected to help the managing body to understand the conditions to be satisfied for the recognition and the measures to be taken for improving the efficiency and activities of the school. A similar arrangement has been adopted in the case of colleges affiliated to certain universities and it has been found to work satisfactorily.

3. About one-fifth of the members should be from the guardians of the pupils. The representatives of the guardians should be selected by the other members of the committee from the list of guardians actually borne on the admission register.

4. Two representatives of teachers and one nominee of the District Administration.

5. The Headmaster should be ex-officio Member-Secretary.

The Director of Education should have powers to remove a member of the managing committee of the school after giving him reasonable opportunity to explain. Pending normal appointments, the vacancies may be filled up by his nominees. When the Director of Education is also the President of the Board of Secondary Education, all such action taken by him should be reported to the Board for approval.

I would further suggest that the term of a school managing committee should in no case be less than

seven years. There are perhaps good reasons why the term should be extended even further. You may have seen in the first part of this book (pp. 25-26) my reference to the practice of the New York State where the long term of membership of the Board of Regents ensures freedom from party interference and enables the school system to benefit from the accumulation of wide and varied educational experience. However, in the present circumstances we might first begin by extending it to seven years unless you feel that a longer term is feasible.

Yours sincerely,
Humayun Kabir

NEW DELHI,
1st October, 1954.

MY DEAR MINISTER,

I made certain suggestions regarding the constitution of the managing committees of High and Higher Secondary schools in my letter dated 28th September 1954. It is obvious, however, that for improving school discipline, it is not only necessary to reconstitute the managing committees on the suggested pattern but also to prescribe certain general standards and conditions for the recognition of such schools. In many States such standards and conditions have already been laid down, but in recent years it appears that there has been a certain laxity in their enforcement. This may be due partly to the great increase in the number of schools and partly to the great demand for schools among the people which lead to political and other forms of pressure on the administration.

In the present letter, I wish to make certain suggestions in respect of the recognition and general standards of High and Higher Secondary schools and their management by Local Boards. I feel that if they are adopted with local modifications in the light of the special circumstances of your State, this will help to improve the general condition of schools :

- (1) Every management should be required to draw up definite rules of service wherein the conditions of salary, leave, pension, provident fund, etc. are definitely laid down.

Every teacher on his appointment should receive a copy of these conditions and execute an agreement for service in the school.

- (2) Every management should be required to provide an endowment for the proper running of the school. The Director of Education may draw up a scale of endowments for various types of schools after taking into consideration the strength of the school, the number of courses that the school proposes to undertake and the general requirements of efficiency.
- (3) Every management should satisfy the Directorate that adequate accommodation is available for the satisfactory running of the school and for games.
- (4) The conditions of service should be uniform for the whole State and there should be no differences, as far as possible, between teachers in State school and those in privately managed schools in point of scales of salary, conditions and security of service and other amenities.
- (5) The number of pupils admitted per class and the total strength of the whole school should in every case conform to the instructions of the Department, taking into consideration the material facilities and the staff available, as well as the number of subjects for which the school seeks recognition.
- (6) The scale of 'fees fixed by managements should be subject to approval by the Depart-

ment of Education. It should not be open to any management to add arbitrarily to the special fees charged for various activities. It should also be guaranteed that such fees are spent for the objects for which they are collected. It might interest you to know that in one of the States it has recently been provided that such fees should be charged only once in a year and should not exceed the amount of the tuition fee for a month.

- (7) No member of the managing committee should be allowed to interfere directly or indirectly in the internal administration of the school, the discipline of the students or the duties of the teachers.

It is hardly necessary to add that the prescription of the above conditions would presume that the managements should obtain prior approval of the Director of Education before opening a school, which should be accorded only when the minimum conditions laid down have been fulfilled. It would also be desirable to provide that all the managing bodies are duly registered.

I would also like to draw your attention to the administration of schools maintained by Local Boards. I am sure you will agree that there is a great need for toning-up the administration of these institutions. I would suggest that each Local Board should have a small executive body for the management of its schools. The strength of this Body should not exceed nine including the District Inspector of Schools or some other nominee of the Directorate as an ex-officio

member. In the case of local authorities, which have only one school in their charge, the headmaster should be an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee. In other cases, a senior Headmaster should by rotation be included as an ex-officio member.

It would also be necessary to ensure that the Boards do not interfere with the internal management of their schools or with the powers or duties of the headmasters. The Secondary Education Commission (*vide* page 186 of the Report) has noted with regret that in many cases members of Local Bodies do not hesitate to assume a self-imposed responsibility to visit schools, to examine the records and sometimes actually to interfere with school teaching. The Commission has deprecated in strong terms this tendency and recommended that no member of a Local Body, other than the members of the School Committee, should have the right to visit any of its schools or to interfere with its internal management in any manner. It is only the President of the Executive Committee who should be authorised to call for reports or information from the headmaster. You will agree that unless the status of the headmaster and teachers is properly safeguarded, schools will fail to function efficiently and exercise wholesome influence on the character and personality of their pupils.

There is one other matter to which I would like to draw your attention. It has sometimes been reported that teachers do not in fact draw the total emoluments to which they are entitled. Some associations of teachers have gone so far as to say that they would like all salaries of teachers—whether in aided or private schools—to be paid through the agency of the Inspector

of Schools. I doubt if this is practicable, but I trust that in framing the school codes, you will provide a clause which may offer teachers protection against unjustified cuts or deductions from their salary.

Yours sincerely,
Humayun Kabir

NEW DELHI,
15th October, 1954.

MY DEAR MINISTER,

This is my third letter in accordance with the direction contained in the Prime Minister's letter of 28th August addressed to Chief Ministers of all States. In my last two letters, I made certain suggestions regarding the constitution of school managing committees and the general standards and conditions of recognition of schools. In the present letter I propose to offer certain suggestions towards reforming the constitution of the controlling bodies of the universities *i.e.*, University Senates, Syndicates and Academic Council in order to free them from intrigue and political influences. I would also like to suggest certain changes in the method of appointing Vice-Chancellors. I am sure you will give your best attention to these suggestions and take early steps to give them effect in respect of your university/universities.

You will recall that the University Education Commission has recommended that at least one half of the members of the Senate or Court should be teachers and the others outsiders and that all Principals of affiliated or constituent college should be *ex-officio* members. I suggest that about two-thirds of the members should be teachers and one-third outsiders and that if possible one senior teacher from each college may also be given a seat on this body. It is further necessary to provide that the appointment of teachers is, as far as possible, made by seniority and rotation instead of election. As you are aware, intrigues and factionalism often enter universities because of

contested elections to various academic bodies. Care should also be taken so to arrange the colleges and subjects that no single college or faculty has unduly large or small representation.

The University Commission has also made important recommendations regarding the constitution of the Syndicate or the Executive Council. I feel that this should be forthwith implemented. I would also suggest that the size of this body may be somewhat smaller than that recommended by the Commission. It is doubtful if the High Courts and the Public Service Commission would like to associate themselves with the University Syndicates and we may leave them out. It is also not necessary to have more than one nominee of the Chancellor on this body. It is suggested, therefore, that the maximum size of a Syndicate should be about 17. In the constitution of the Syndicate or Executive Council also, election should be avoided as far as possible and members appointed by office or by rotation.

The recommendations made by the University Commission regarding the constitution of the Academic Council also deserve attention and may be adopted immediately. Here also elections should be avoided in favour of appointment by rotation according to seniority.

The key to any improvement in the universities is the Vice-Chancellor and we have to be specially careful about his appointment. As already suggested by the Prime Minister, the mode of appointment in vogue in the Delhi University, a method which avoids most of the drawbacks associated with election or nomination may be adopted. Under this system, the Syndicate or Executive Council of the University nominates two

distinguished educationists not directly connected with the university and the Visitor nominates the third. These three constitute a Selection Committee which submits to the Visitor a panel of not more than three names out of which one is appointed the Vice-Chancellor. In the case of the State Universities if the State Government so wish, the third member of the Selection Committee may be a nominee of the Chancellor. The main point is to ensure that there is no contest or canvassing for the post of the Vice-Chancellor, and the selection can be made out of a panel of names submitted by a body of experts who have knowledge and competence but are not in any way directly concerned with the administration and still less with the factions, where these exist, of the universities. If this method of appointment is accepted, there need be no objection to the re-election of the same person as the Vice-Chancellor for a second or even a third term.

As the implementation of some of these suggestions may require changes in statutes and in some cases amendments in University Acts, I have been desired to draw your special attention to this aspect of the question where amendments of University Acts are already under consideration.

I am sure you will give these suggestions full consideration. With the setting up of the University Grants Commission and the possibility that larger funds may be available to improve University education, it is imperative that their machinery and administration is improved so as to take full advantage of the new facilities.

Yours sincerely,
Humayun Kabir

NEW DELHI,
29th October, 1954.

MY DEAR MINISTER,

This is my fourth letter in accordance with the directions contained in the Prime Minister's letter of 28th August, 1954, addressed to Chief Ministers of all States. In my letter dated 15-10-54, I offered certain suggestion on the constitution of universities and appointment of Vice-Chancellors. It is however obvious that the problem of student indiscipline has many other facets which require consideration.

In the present letter I wish to share with you some thoughts for raising the status of the teacher. You will agree that this is closely tied up with the question of his remuneration and other conditions of service. You will no doubt also agree that in these respects he has not had a fair deal so far, and this in spite of the best intentions of all educational administrators. I wish to confine myself to proposals which are largely non-financial in character. For reasons beyond our control, scales of salary cannot be improved to the necessary extent in the immediate future, but this makes it the more necessary to take such other measures as we can to raise the status of the teacher and make him feel an honoured member of society. In particular, I would request you to consider the suggestions outlined below :—

- (1) Teachers and their organisations may be associated in an increasing measure with the formulation of educational policies at all

levels. Every encouragement should be given for the establishment of professional bodies like Conferences of Headmasters of Secondary schools as well as of Elementary schools, and the educational authorities may consult such bodies in formulating and implementing educational programmes.

- (2) Teachers, on the basis of merit and seniority, should be appointed by rotation to important educational bodies like university senates as well as to welfare organisations engaged in constructive work.
- (3) Whenever a State contemplates any important piece of legislation, it may consider the advisability of appointing a committee of appropriate university teachers to examine it from an academic standpoint. The State Governments are not of course bound to accept the advice of the committee but the fact that the university teachers have been consulted will not only tend to raise their status but ensure a critical and disinterested examination of proposals by persons who are comparatively free from political bias. The teachers will also benefit by such an arrangement because they will get an opportunity to study concrete proposals and thereby deepen their understanding of social reality.
- (4) In some universities there is a growing tendency to emphasise research at the cost of education. To quote Jose Ortega Y Gasset :
"One of the evils attending the confusion of the university with science has been the

awarding of professorships, in keeping with the mania of the time, to research workers who are nearly always very poor professors, and regard their teaching as time stolen away from their work in the laboratory or the archives. This was brought home to me by experience during my years of study in Germany. I have lived close to a good number of the foremost scientists of our time, yet I have not found among them a single good teacher—so let no one come and tell me that the German University, as an institution, is a model.”* While research is important, due recognition should also be given to a teacher for his teaching qualities and for his share in building up the corporate life of the campus. It is obvious that this recognition can also take forms other than an increase in emoluments.

In regard to the Primary and Secondary teachers, I would like to make the following suggestions :—

1. The State may organise special receptions for Secondary and Primary school teachers by the Head of the State and the Chief Minister. Also, if the Chief Minister and other Ministers make it a point to meet some Secondary and Primary school teachers at every place that they visit, it would add to the status of the teaching profession in the eyes of the general public. The reception given by the President and the Education Minister of India to Primary school teachers of Delhi some time back was greatly appreciated by them

*Gasset : Mission of the University, p. 72

as adding to their prestige in the countryside. In addition, representative teachers should be invited to all State functions.

2. The organisation of refresher courses and holiday camps for teachers would go a long way to strengthen the morale of the profession. The All-India Headmasters' Seminar which was held last year at Taradevi and the eight regional seminars held during this year have had a very good effect on the morale of teachers. The former was attended by 50 Headmasters from 25 States and cost less than Rs. 20,000/-. The expenditure on other regional seminars has been approximately of the same order. A State Headmasters' seminar on similar lines would cost much less. If two such Seminars are held in every State every year, some 100 Headmasters would be able to benefit from them. If, in addition, another sum of Rs. 40,000/- is spent on Secondary school teachers and Rs. 50,000/- on Primary school teachers for holding holiday camps and organising convalescent homes, it will not only improve their professional competence but give them a new sense of confidence and the feeling that the State and society are genuinely interested in their welfare and hold their work in proper esteem. You will agree that a sum of rupees one lakh a year thus spent should not prove a prohibitive proposition for even the smallest of States, while the corresponding return in terms of human and educational values would be immeasurably large.

3. The larger Secondary schools should explore the possibility of introducing the proctorial system by which each teacher is made responsible for a number of pupils living in his locality. Each student will then

have some member of the staff to whom he can confidently look as 'guide, philosopher and friend' and to whom he can go for personal counsel on any matter.

4. Selected teachers, on the basis of meritorious work, may be invited to the State Capital to come and live as guests in Government House for week-ends, or if conditions permit for about a week. I found in Turkey that there is a district-wise competition, and the Headmaster of the best school in each district is invited by the provincial Governor and after a nation-wide competition, the Headmaster and the best school is invited to come and stay for a few days with the President of the Republic.

Nothing that I have said should be taken to imply any support for continuing the existing salary scales of teachers. These scales must be improved as fast and as far as the economic conditions of the State permit. crying shame that teachers in elementary and secondary schools are paid salaries that are sometimes below even the subsistence level.

I hope you will kindly consider these suggestions and take early steps to put them into effect with such modifications as you may consider necessary.

Yours sincerely,
Humayun Kabir

NEW DELHI,
4th November. 1954.

MY DEAR MINISTER,

In this fifth letter in the series on school discipline, I wish to place before you some suggestions for the reform of examinations. You are aware of the various evil effects of an undue emphasis on examinations at various levels. Such over-emphasis has tended to retard the initiative of the teachers, stereotype the curriculum, encourage mechanical and lifeless methods of teaching, discourage the spirit of experimentation and generally place the stress on wrong or unimportant things. It is hardly necessary for me to point to other undesirable features of this undue stress on examinations. Intended primarily to measure the academic attainment of students, examinations do not test the other aspects of their development. The examiners often forget that the school of today is concerned not only with intellectual pursuits but also with the emotional and social development of the child, his physical and mental health, his social adjustment, in a word, with the all-round development of his personality. If examinations are to be of real value, they must take into consideration this new outlook and attempt to assess the all-round progress of the examinee.

Even as a test of intellectual attainment, the validity of the present pattern of examinations has been widely questioned. It has been repeatedly pointed out, for instance, that the present method of examining by means of essay-type questions has obvious limitations, as the evaluation depends on too

many subjective factors. The likes and dislikes of the examiner, the chance selection of topics of preparation by the examinee and the elegance of the style may have a decisive influence on the results. These examinations cannot, therefore, be relied upon as an accurate test even in their own limited field.

The undue emphasis on the final examination has other and even more undesirable effects. In the brochure on '*Student Indiscipline*' I have discussed them at some length and would in this letter merely point out that as a result of such undue emphasis, the pupils tend to neglect their work throughout the year. Since their future will be largely determined by the final examination without regard to what they may have done during the whole year, they place all their hopes in passing the examination. They, therefore, cram for the last few months or weeks, and sometimes do permanent damage to their health. Because they do not study steadily throughout the year, they lose the habit of continuous and sustained work. What is even worse, they are at times tempted to resort to unfair practices to make up for the shortcomings of lack of work for the whole year. One of the basic causes of student indiscipline can be traced to this unsatisfactory attitude towards the final examination.

If these and allied defects of the examination system are to be removed, the following reforms should be urgently carried out :

- (a) The number of external examinations should be cut down to the minimum. Attention is particularly invited to the recommendation of the Secondary Education Commission that there should be only one public examination

to indicate the completion of the school course (vide p. 151 of the Secondary Education Commission Report).

- (b) A reasonable proportion of marks—at least about 20%—in the Secondary School Leaving Certificate Examination should be reserved for the class work done by the pupil during the last two years of his school life. The cumulative record at the end of each quarter may be sent to the Board of Secondary Education or the Directorate (depending on who conducts the S.S.L.C. examination) and may be tabulated there so that the marks can be added to those obtained in the examination itself. I have already forwarded a recommendation on these lines to the Vice-Chancellors of Universities and Chairmen of Boards of Secondary Education. I hope you will now kindly pursue the matter with the authorities concerned and ensure that the proposal is put into effect without undue delay. I must also make it clear that this is in addition to the Prime Minister's suggestion that the proposed changes in the examination system should first be confined to internal examinations in schools and colleges.
- (c) Within the school itself, the emphasis on one all important annual examination should be reduced. Some schools have already abandoned such examinations and achieved good results. They have introduced periodical weekly and monthly tests for purposes of promotion. One system which keeps an

effective check on work throughout the year is to have two terminal examinations in addition to the annual examination. A total made up of 30% of the marks obtained in the first terminal, 40% of those in the second terminal and 60% of those in the annual examination gives the final evaluation for the year.

- (d) In fact, neither the external nor the internal examination, singly or jointly, can give a complete picture of a pupil's all-round progress at any stage of education. For this purpose, a proper system of school records should be maintained indicating for every pupil the work done by him in school from day to day, month to month, term to term and from year to year. As an example of a good record form for use in schools, reference may be made to the Ministry's pamphlet No. 156 (*School Record*) which is based on work done by the National Foundation for Educational Research in England and the National Committee on Cumulative Records appointed by the U. S. Office of Education. The U.S.A. Record form is elaborate and detailed and may not be feasible for us due to the general lack of experience of our teachers and the non-availability of reliable measures of psychological attributes. There is, however, nothing to prevent us from introducing simple cards for recording information on the most salient aspects of a child's development and this is what the pamphlet mentioned above seeks to provide. With some modifications here and there, it would, I feel,

prove suitable for use in schools throughout India.

- (e) I would also suggest that the subjective element, which is unavoidable in the present purely essay-type of examination, should be reduced by introducing side by side certain objective tests of attainments. Objective tests have also their drawbacks, for they may sometimes be a test of memory and information rather than of judgment or powers of reasoning. It is precisely in these fields that the essay-type of examination, if judiciously used, has certain advantages. It cannot, however, be accepted as the only valid method of measuring achievement. One of its greatest disadvantages is that it gives undue weight to *verbal facility* in which so many individual differences exist. Judicious combination of objective tests and essay-type of examinations, if correlated with the day-to-day achievements of pupils as reflected in their daily class-work can however offer a fairly reliable estimate of the abilities and the attainment of pupils. Since in any case we cannot altogether do away with examinations, such a combination seems the wisest course to adopt.

I would also request you to consider one other suggestion. If there is any school in the State which because of the quality of its teachers, its past traditions and facilities for various types of curricular and co-curricular activities can be regarded as outstanding, you may kindly consider giving it a greater latitude in the matter of conducting its own examinations.

The pupils in such a school need not take the S. S. L. C. examination but sit in tests and examinations devised by the school itself. The certificate given by such a school may be given the same recognition as the S. S. L. Certificate. In order to ensure that there is no cause for complaint about standards, such 'free' schools may be selected on the recommendation of special committees consisting of representatives of the Universities, the Secondary Boards and the Directorate appointed under rules framed for the purpose, and subjected to periodic scrutiny.

As I am going out of the country for about six weeks, I shall not be able to write to you again till some time in the first week of January, 1955. I then propose to place before you some further suggestions for reform of Secondary education, with special reference to co-curricular and social activities and measures of self-discipline among pupils.

Yours sincerely,
Humayun Kabir

NEW DELHI,
3rd February, 1955

MY DEAR MINISTER,

I am thankful to you for the interest you have shown in the various suggestions for dealing with the problem of student indiscipline made in this series of letters. In the present letter, which is sixth in the series, I wish to draw your attention to certain activities which may help to increase the initiative and sense of responsibility of students. Some of these activities will also add to the material and social amenities of schools and colleges. Together they will, I feel confident, contribute directly to an improvement of atmosphere in educational institutions.

I am sure you will agree that the sense of responsibility grows only through the exercise of responsibility. Where pupils live in an authoritarian atmosphere, they are bound to lack initiative and self-confidence. Besides, such an atmosphere tends to suppress their personality. The result is that at the slightest opportunity, they are likely to break bounds and express themselves in various types of unsocial and anti-social actions. One of the best ways of checking such tendencies in the young is to give them ample opportunity of self-expression in socially useful and creative programmes of various types.

Placing of responsibility on students will develop their self-discipline and self-reliance and foster a spirit of trust and shared responsibility. As the spirit of

responsibility grows among them, they should be increasingly associated in various programmes of the school. Subject to the guidance and over-all control of the Principal or Headmaster, they may even be given an opportunity to perform certain functions which are normally regarded as the prerogative of the management. The participation of students in such management activities will remove distrust, create a sense of corporate responsibility and contribute effectively towards training in citizenship.

In keeping with this important principle, I would like to suggest the following measures for introducing increasing self-government in schools and colleges :—

1. Some of the responsibility for the maintenance of discipline may be transferred to students by instituting a well-conceived House system. The Prime Minister in his letter has also endorsed the suggestion for the introduction of such a system. Under this system, the pupils would be divided into groups of 20 or 25. Each group would be the special responsibility of a teacher who should, however, be assisted by one or more monitors. The monitors should be selected not only for academic distinction but also their qualities of character. I need hardly add that while the House System has obvious advantages, it may also at times lead to the growth of factions and narrowness among pupils. There is also a risk that an unscrupulous teacher may acquire an almost inquisitorial power over his charges. These are, however, avoidable and I am sure you will take necessary precautions against the occurrence of such risks.

2. The monitors of different classes together with certain members of the staff may constitute a council

for the maintenance of discipline in the institution as a whole. The Principal or the Headmaster should recognise these monitors as leaders in their respective classes and the council as the collective leadership of the entire institution.

3. The council of monitors may also function as a juvenile Court of Honour. It is common experience that children when put on their honour tend to refrain from indiscipline and other anti-social acts. Some universities which are experimenting with Courts of Honour and Proctorial Boards have found that these are quite effective in controlling even serious situations like strikes and mass action of students.

4. As an example of delegation of power to students, selected students may be placed in charge of school libraries or organisation of school sports and games. It may be possible to develop a Students' Library, as distinct from the School or College Library, which may be entirely managed by students and assist poor but needy students by providing them with standard text-books and reference books for stipulated periods.

The Prime Minister has in his letter drawn your attention to the need of improving material and social amenities in schools and colleges and the possibility of doing so through voluntary labour. I am sure you will agree about the immense possibilities that can be developed by enlisting student labour under the leadership of teachers. Of the many benefits that will accrue, I would draw your attention to only two. On the one hand, the teachers will come into closer contact with their students. On the other, the students will find creative outlets for their energy.

Projects should, however, at least at the beginning, be mainly of the type which add to the amenities of the students themselves. Such projects are likely to have a greater appeal for them. Also, by canalising their enthusiasm in such work, they learn that in working for the community, they are at the same time working for themselves. Some of the possible types of activities may be listed but this is only illustrative and by no means exhaustive. Thus students can build for themselves playgrounds, stadia, theatres. They can undertake the improvement of gardens. In the case of older students, their labour may be utilised in building hostels etc. That this is practicable has been shown by the experience of Shri Bhau Rao Patel of Rayat Sikshan Sanstha of Satara (Bombay), who has constructed buildings for one college, four training centres, many High and Primary schools and some hostels almost entirely by the labour of students. Wherever necessary, such work may be paid so that needy students can maintain themselves out of the proceeds.

It is hoped that working for the school community will develop in students the habit and the desire to work for the community at large. As soon as students from schools and colleges show any interest in such social work, be it for the improvement of life in urban or rural areas, they should be given every encouragement and guidance. On the educational front, they can teach adults to read and write and develop crafts. In the field of agriculture, they can participate in almost every phase of the agricultural activity—ploughing, planting, compost-making, irrigation, preparing of seed-beds, transplanting, harvesting. They can contribute to the social life of the people by mixing with the villagers in informal gatherings and organising

and taking part in folk dances, music and games. In the field of health and hygiene, they can teach sanitation and help the locality in programmes of cleanliness and preventive hygiene.

It cannot be too strongly urged that all such work must remain on a voluntary basis. Unless boys and girls go into social service programmes because they are genuinely interested in social service, the consequences will not be satisfactory to the public or to themselves. This, however, is a point I need not labour.

The Ministry of Education have sponsored schemes for the enlistment of students in Youth Camps for labour service, which have so far had a very satisfactory response. I may draw your attention to this Ministry letters No. F. 5-21/54-D. 7 dated 11th May, 21st June and 2nd September, 1954, addressed to the Vice-Chancellors of Universities and Education Secretaries of all State Governments on the subject of Youth Camps and Labour Service by Students and to the Ministry's brochure entitled "Work Camps Management."

The participation of students in N. C. C. and A. C. C. programmes will also have a healthy influence. Before I conclude, I would like to mention also the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides movement. This provides healthy and useful outlets for the energies of the children, makes them more self-reliant and helps to develop in them a spirit of service to the community. However, I propose to deal with this and other extra-curricular activities in some detail in my next letter.

With greetings and best wishes for the New Year.

Yours sincerely,
Humayun Kabir

NEW DELHI,
26th March, 1955.

MY DEAR MINISTER,

My last letter was devoted largely to a discussion of activities that are calculated to develop initiative and a sense of responsibility in pupils of various grades. I had there made a passing reference to scouting and guiding, the N. C. C. and A. C. C. and wish in this and the next letter to develop the points I had made and make more detailed suggestions toward the organisation of such extra-curricular activities.

It is hardly necessary for me to tell you how extra-curricular activities promote a variety of important educational ends. They make the pupils increasingly self-reliant, develop their initiative, teach them social co-operation, increase their interest in the school and discover and develop their special abilities and aptitudes. Perhaps their greatest value lies in developing in the pupils a true sense of discipline by offering them opportunities to work in fields of their own choice. We all know how things we have ourselves elected to do are never neglected or done in a slipshod manner. They are thus the most effective means for creating a sense of responsibility and personal pride by holding up high standards of conduct.

Unfortunately, there are many parents and teachers who even today criticise the place and importance given to these activities in the school programmes. Nor is such criticism confined to our country alone. They seem to fear that because of the time and attention devoted to extra-curricular activities, class

work must suffer. I am sure you will agree that this is a wrong approach. Whatever may have been the position in the past, the school of today exists not merely for promoting scholarship but for assisting in the total development of the child's personality. In respect of academic attainments also, such fears do not seem justified. Some Western pedagogues have investigated the problem and their findings invariably are that extra-curricular activities have in no way interfered with the progress of pupils in purely academic fields. As a matter of fact, not only has participation no adverse effect on scholarship, but some research workers have reported in favour of a positive relationship.

I have no wish to tire you with quotations, but I cannot resist the temptation of bringing to your notice two case studies that have a direct bearing on the subject. A. S. Swanson conducted an investigation of Kansas City High School students before and after participation several years ago and concluded : "There is little evidence that participation in extra-curricular activities affects scholarship." Merle Prunty in her survey of the Tulsa Oklahoma High School found that "Controlled extra-curricular participation does not lower scholarship, but rather stimulates the students to improve their scholarship records."

You are no doubt aware of the change in attitude towards such activities that has taken place over the last four or five decades. Here in India, Rabindranath Tagore in his School at Santiniketan recognised over fifty years ago the unity which informs all expression of life. He, therefore, introduced courses in which play and work were inextricably mingled. Modern peda-

gogic theory is becoming increasingly aware that any policy which accentuates the dualism between curricular and extra-curricular activities is unfortunate. Such a conception hampers the full development of both these programmes as it fails to recognise that each can contribute to and enrich the other. Discussing this issue, our own Secondary Education Commission has observed : "We do not visualize that these (the new Secondary) schools will have dull, routine-ridden, formal lessons in the class plus a number of independent unrelated 'extra-curricular' activities which have intrinsic relationship with them either in content or methods. The entire programme of the school will be visualised as a unity and inspired by a psychologically congenial and stimulating approach, the so-called 'work' being characterised by the feeling of joy and self-expression usually associated with play and hobbies, and these latter having something of the meaningfulness and purpose which are normally considered a special feature of academic work." (P. 218).

In Gandhiji's conception of Basic education also, one of the most important elements is the denial of any sharp difference between work, play and study. All school work must be correlated and form integral parts of a new pattern of life. Growing recognition of this fact in the West is seen in the framing of programmes based on the essentially complementary nature of curricular and extra-curricular activities. That is why the phraseology has also changed and we speak today of "co-curricular activities," "co-lateral activities" and "curricularised activities" rather than extra-curricular activities. What till now has been regarded as outside the curriculum is thus recognised to be a necessary element of the curriculum itself.

In regard to the organisation of extra-curricular activities, experience in general is that this should follow certain well-defined principles if the programmes are to be fully effective. The most important of these principles appear to be the following :—

1. Extra-curricular activities should, as far as possible, be organised during regular school hours

If a school were fully residential, or at least all the pupils lived in the vicinity of the school, there may have been some case for organising some of these activities outside school hours. In the conditions prevailing in our country, to organise them outside school hours means denying the opportunity of participation to many, perhaps the majority. Besides, even those who participate cannot benefit fully because of the lack of amenities like school meals, school baths etc. Wherever possible, provision should, therefore, be made to have them in regular school periods. Scheduling them in regular periods not only offers all students an opportunity for participation but also lends to the programme dignity and official sanction and creates the demand that the time provided for is profitably spent.

2. As far as possible, all students should participate in these activities

If extra-curricular activities are good for one student, they are good for all. We must, however, remember two things. The same activity may not appeal to all in the same degree. Also, compulsion will take away the real value of such activities. Hence,

participation should not be compulsory and students should be given freedom to choose between various activities. It may also be mentioned that participation should be limited if the pupil is physically unsuited for full participation or if as a result, the pupil's regular school work suffers too much. Limitation may be imposed also if he spreads himself out so thin that he does his extra-curricular activities in only a fair fashion when he can and should be doing them much better. Such restriction will not only benefit him but also provide additional opportunities for other students. In almost all activities concerned with a pupil's preparation for life—whether it be through formal study or through such extra-curricular task—concentration has great virtue for both the individual and the school.

3. Extra-curricular activities should be considered a part of the regular work of teachers

If these activities are to be treated as an integral part of the school's work and not merely as "outsiders," then it is only fair to the teachers that any extra load placed on them in this behalf is recognised in some definite way. Such accreditation will improve the quality of extra-curricular activities by giving them due place in the school programmes.

4. The teacher-organiser should be an adviser and not a dictator

A teacher sometimes finds it difficult to be anything but a dictator. Much of his training has been in preparation for and practice in a superior-inferior relationship. There are limitations to such an attitude

even in the formal work of the classroom. The best teachers are those who can evoke the greatest interest and response of the pupils themselves. Outside the class, a bossing attitude is an even greater drawback. It is quite obvious that if the teacher tends to dominate, particularly in an organisation of the extra-curricular type, he defeats the very purpose of the organisation. Instead of developing the initiative of the pupils, he tends to curb them and thus makes the whole affair unproductive from the point of view of the pupils. Besides, such a hectoring attitude is bound to develop in the pupils an antipathy to the organisation or the activity or to both. The result is that even if they are unwillingly compelled to participate, they will break away at the first opportunity. The teacher has, therefore, to be very careful about his role in all such activities. Being older than the students, having more experience, more maturity and better judgment he is bound to exercise leadership, but his leadership must not be obtrusive and he should try to assist in the conduct of these activities in a friendly and helpful association.

**5. Extra-curricular activities should
be adequately administered
and supervised.**

Because the Headmaster is responsible for everything that goes on in the school, it is necessary that he should have an overall control of extra-curricular work also. He should, however, do this, not in the manner of a dictator, but as the leader of a group of free men. Even in a small school where it is possible for the Headmaster to administer and supervise the extra-

curricular programmes by himself, he should associate some teachers and a few selected pupils, at least in an advisory capacity. In a large institution, it is essential to appoint a properly designated and charged committee representing both the students and the staff for developing, co-ordinating and administering these activities but with ultimate responsibility resting with the Headmaster.

6. Extra-curricular activities are not all important

While all such co-curricular activities should be given adequate recognition, we should not commit the opposite mistake of giving them an extravagant importance. This is a danger which has become a real one in some schools in the west, where, e.g., the members of a football team are treated as superior beings, exempt from the general school discipline. We must be clear that it is quite wrong to suggest that extra-curricular activities represent a complete and adequate programme of educational opportunities. These activities do offer excellent supplementary settings and should be effectively utilised but without exaggerating their efficacy. A school with only extra-curricular activities would be as defective as one without any.

In my next letter, I propose to make a few suggestions regarding the organisation of some of the more important of these extra-curricular activities.

Yours sincerely,
Humayun Kabir

NEW DELHI,
28th April, 1955.

MY DEAR MINISTER,

In my last letter of 26th March, 1955, I had said I would send some suggestions regarding the organisation of extra-curricular activities in schools. They can be only illustrative and should not be regarded either as exhausting the various possibilities or as rigid patterns that must be followed without any variation. Extra-curricular activities may, and perhaps ought to, vary from school to school. As you are aware, the tendency in recent times is to describe them as co-curricular rather than extra-curricular activities in order to bring out clearly that they should form an integral part of the education of a child. Various factors will govern the organisation of such activities depending upon the location and the resources of the school and the interest and aptitude of the staff and students. The reference in this letter is, therefore, only to some of the more important of such possible activities.

I. Scout and Guide Activities

Scouting (and this includes guiding) is one of the most effective means for training of character and developing qualities of good citizenship. Through its various games and activities, scouting fosters in pupils a spirit of social service, good behaviour, respect for leaders, loyalty to the State and a preparedness to meet any emergency. I would, therefore, strongly recommend that scouting and guiding should be made as attractive as possible for school children. I feel that, short of compulsion, every effort should be

made to bring as many children as possible into the Scouts and Guides movement. Scouting and Guiding are particularly valuable in the earlier stages of a pupil's career, for they inculcate habits of discipline without any suggestion of regimentation or colourless conformity. In the last Conference of Education Secretaries, I had, therefore, suggested that at least up to the age of 13+, children should be given every encouragement for joining the Scouts or Guides. It would be necessary for the State Government to give adequate financial assistance to the movement, secure suitable sites for camps and extend recognition to the teachers who take an active part in its programmes.

2. National Cadet Corps

During the last few years, the Government of India have instituted the Junior Division of the National Cadet Corps which is open to pupils of schools. Owing to the heavy cost of the scheme, many of the State Governments have not been able to expand facilities for the Corps in proportion to the demand for training. Pupils have, however, been greatly attracted by the Corps and there has been general demand for its expansion. In order to ensure that the most effective use is made of this somewhat more expensive form of training, I am inclined to suggest that pupils only in the senior classes of school should be admitted to the Corps. If enrolment is confined to boys and girls of 15—17, the Corps is likely to have a much greater impact on school life as this would mean that a larger proportion of senior boys and girls would get the benefit of training in the Corps. I would like to add that in recruiting cadets for the Corps, preference should be given to those who have experience of scout-

ing or guiding. Personally, I would even be prepared to make this a necessary condition for enrolment in the Corps.

3. Auxiliary Cadet Corps

In view of the cost of N. C. C., a simplified form of training known as the Auxiliary Cadet Corps has recently been instituted. The Corps is not military in character and is administered mainly through the teachers. Its programme includes various types of social welfare activities and there is a proposal to develop the Corps into a kind of National Youth Service. If it is confined to children of 13+ and above and preference is given to those who have some experience of scouting and guiding, it can serve two purposes. On the one hand, it will give an indirect fillip to the scouts and guides movement, and on the other develop a sense of discipline and service among the adolescents. The facilities of this Corps can be generally made available to pupils in all schools. Insistence on the improvement of physique and provision of social welfare activities as an integral part of education will help to improve discipline, give pupils greater confidence and make for better enjoyment of life.

4. Training in First-Aid, Junior Red Cross and St. John's Ambulance

These activities have a special value because they enable the pupils to render useful forms of service and thus develop a sense of personal and social worth. It will be of great advantage to the children and to the community if every pupil is trained in First Aid and Junior Red Cross work and if some of them receive training in St. John's Ambulance work. Such training

can be very profitably utilised on the occasion of fairs, festivals, epidemics or floods or whenever large congregations of people gather.

5. Educational Tours and Youth Hostels Movements

Educational tours satisfy one of the most important psychological urges of the youth. The adolescent is by nature a wanderer, physically as well as mentally. It is natural for him to desire to take trips, to see new things and places and to meet new people. The traditional school practice of putting him in a seat and requiring him to remain there for long stretches of time may be necessary for learning certain things, but it puts an undue strain upon the natural restlessness of the young. History, Geography and Literature (specially travel and adventure stories) do to some extent satisfy his thirst for novelty and adventure, but the satisfaction is incomplete and vicarious. To quote Rabindranath Tagore : "It is my firm conviction that there is a connection between movement of body and movement of mind. For this reason I think the ideal school is a travelling school. Education given in a closed schoolroom is cut off from most of the strenuous drama of life. A fixed classroom education destroys the human harmony of body and mind, so that the body remains unskilled and the mind listless. It gives familiarity with words but not with things."

Educational tours supply experiences which are at once educational and personal. In other words, they sharpen students' understanding of things and people by fostering interest in and acquaintance with the affairs, the history and the aspirations of the commu-

nity. It may be mentioned here that in Japan, every Secondary school pupil must, before the completion of his or her course, make a tour of places of historical interest or natural beauty in Japan. These journeys are financed by the State so that even the poorest pupil is not denied the opportunity of seeing all places of interest in the country.

In recent times, there has been a great development of the Youth Hostels Movement to meet this demand for travel by young people. Throughout Europe, a chain of such hostels makes it possible for young students to travel at a nominal cost. A beginning has recently been made in India. Through the establishment of youth hostels, it will become increasingly possible for our young people to visit different parts of the country and meet in an atmosphere of cordiality and understanding. The extension of this movement should be looked upon as an integral part of the national scheme for education. As it can contribute very greatly to inter-state understanding, it deserves a very high priority in our schemes of activities for the young. Special mention may be made of the hostels which have been or are being built under this scheme to enable young people to travel almost up to the base of the Kanchinghanga or to go to the famed Pindari glacier.

6. Sports and Athletics

Apart from their physical and recreational significance, sports and athletics possess great educational value. Participation in these activities promotes qualities of sportsmanship which are of the greatest social import. By playing for a team, the pupil learns

to subordinate himself for the good of the group. There is perhaps no better way of learning discipline and co-operation which are essential conditions for social welfare, indeed for social survival.

The present organisation of games and sports in schools and colleges leaves much to be desired. It is only a very small proportion of pupils—these are generally members of the various school elevens—who get the opportunity to play. The institutions also seem to be more interested in preparing for and winning matches than in using games and sports for their educational value. This not only denies opportunity to the average pupil, but is also harmful for the young “heroes” who, when unduly lionised, develop attributes which often make adjustment to work and life more difficult. If the rich educational potentialities of sports and athletics are to be fully exploited, both teachers and pupils must change their present attitude to them, and use them for developing co-operation and discipline among all members of the school.

7. Dramatics

Drama, and what one says of drama will apply with some modification to music, can be an educational medium of great value. It serves both the individual participants and the school as a whole. To the actors, drama gives vocabulary, articulation, confidence, wit, refinement, imaginative sympathy and training in co-operation. To the school, it offers an educational medium of rare power. Experience has shown that a dull and disinterested class may be transformed into an enthusiastic and lively group when a few lessons have been dramatised under the direction of a skilful teacher. Another value to the school is to be found in

the necessity of co-operation between its various departments whenever the production of a play is undertaken. It is also an excellent means of interesting parents and the general public in the activities of the school and in particular in the educational progress of the children.

The very efficacy of the drama makes it necessary to exercise the greatest care in the choice of a play. I have on occasions come across plays selected for school performance which catered to a local prejudice or emphasised some parochial and narrow interest, or worse still, could create a sense of contempt or hatred for another country or community. I would suggest that the selection of a play may be entrusted to a small committee, preferably of teachers with perhaps one or two senior students. The schedule for the year should include a variety of types—historical plays, comedies, fantasies, farces, musical plays etc. The use of several One-Act Plays is perhaps preferable to a few full-length plays, because of the additional educational opportunities offered and the added variety. A larger number of plays is also likely to give opportunities to a larger number of pupils. Plays dealing with immorality and controversial social issues should be eschewed, while the greatest care should be taken in selecting tragedies.

8. Debating

For developing intellectual interests and ability, facility of expression, clear thinking, good sportsmanship, self-reliance, confidence and other allied qualities, debating has few equals. The organisation of debates in schools has not, however, been carried out systematically or with a view to giving all children an opportunity to develop. In inter-school debating contests, it

is well known that it is generally the coach or teacher (and not the student) who selects and organises the argument. The student's role is sometimes confined merely to memorising and reproducing the speech. Sides are selected and roles assigned before the student has begun to study the question. He is thus compelled to "dope" out arguments which he has not himself thought out. The young have a natural tendency to mistake mere assertion, especially if it is loud and emphatic, for proof. Our methods of debating do little to correct this tendency. Some young debators tend to depend on ridicule for discrediting the opponent and do not realise that ridicule is the weapon of only those who have no argument. It is thus no wonder that many a glib student, instead of becoming a keen debater, has ended only by becoming a kind of intellectual "bluffer."

Humour is a great solvent of problems. The young are in any case apt to be terribly in earnest and take themselves far too seriously. Debates are a corrective, for in a debate one may even have to speak against one's convictions. This gives mental agility and resilience, and what is more important, the capacity to see that there may be another point of view. In addition, debates can be a means of developing humour and a sense of proportion. In Western countries, especially in the United Kingdom, wit and humour are regarded as the mark of a good debator. Our young people do not use wit and humour as much as is desirable. This is a pity, for through debates they can learn to laugh at themselves and begin to see how others look at them.

Then again schools do not generally make as extensive a use of debates as is desirable. Generally, training

in debating is confined to a select few. The selection of topics also leaves much to be desired. Students are often required to debate on political, philosophical and moral topics on which even the most learned are sharply divided. The pupils in such a situation can merely reflect the views of the proponents or opponents of the proposition and do not get an opportunity to think for themselves. Reference to authority is important but it does not constitute debate.

I am convinced that many defects in our present use of debates can be removed. The stress on coaching, memorisation of prepared speeches and the restriction of the activity to a very small proportion of pupils will go as extemporaneous debates are organised more frequently. In fact, I would like to see every teacher hold unprepared class debates in which every pupil took part. Greater care should also be taken in the selection of the subjects. We should certainly select subjects that have significance, are interesting and profitable, but the greatest importance should be given to subjects that are suited to the age, maturity, and level of judgment of the pupils. The questions most appropriate for school debates would generally be those concerning the school and its activities, but more serious subjects need not be altogether eschewed. There should also be occasional debates on humorous subjects. Lightness without frivolity is a great social art which pupils can learn only while they are still young. It should also be emphasised that the true object of debate is training the mind and developing the capacity to see and meet opposing points of view. In this way, pupils will learn to value the truth as also the dispassionate search for it.

II

There are many other co-curricular activities which schools can and should develop to the best of their ability and resources. There is no end to the list of such activities and only a few others of the more important ones like hiking, rowing, swimming, music, drawing and painting and gardening can be mentioned. In fact, an ingenious teacher can go on multiplying the list and in this he can get suggestions and support from his more enterprising pupils. Such activities add to the zest of school life and provide a release for the creative talents and social aptitudes of children.

I would go further and say that such activities are a necessary condition for the proper development of children into useful citizens of the State. We today complain of lack of discipline and of anti-social activities of young people, but these are often due to the fact that the young do not have proper outlets for their abundant energy. Provision of such channels in the school has a special value. Children in school are more amenable to control by their teachers than young men and women in colleges and universities. If, therefore, children are given the chance of developing a sense of responsibility and leadership through creative work while they are still in school, they will grow up as disciplined young men and women who will avoid many of the excesses of those who have had no such opportunity.

I will conclude this letter by repeating once again what is becoming almost the burden of my song. The

success of all these activities will largely depend upon the interest shown by the teaching staff. The quality of the teacher is, therefore, the decisive factor for the success of all our projects. While the pupils should be encouraged in every way to stand on their own feet and develop these activities through their own initiative, an enthusiastic teacher should, whenever necessary, be at hand to help and guide them. I would suggest that every teacher, as far as possible, should be required to devote a reasonable portion of his time to co-curricular activities and that this time should be taken into account in fixing his maximum hours of work. Not only so, but every facility should be given to teachers to improve their own competence in these fields. Special camps and training centres should be opened for teachers so that they may equip themselves to be the "friend, philosopher and guide" of the pupils in their charge.

Yours sincerely,
Humayun Kabir

NEW DELHI,
October 1, 1955

MY DEAR MINISTER,

The letters I have written to you in this series have till now dealt with the problem of discipline in its external aspects. I have sent for your consideration suggestions about changes in the constitution of various educational authorities, measures for the improvement of status and quality of teachers and proposals for giving pupils creative outlets for their energies. I have no wish to minimise the importance of these measures and I am convinced that if they are adopted, there will be a great improvement in the atmosphere of schools and colleges. Nevertheless, I must say that they deal with the externals of behaviour and cannot by themselves bring about the change we desire. For this we need what for lack of a better name I would describe as a revival of faith.

I do not use the phrase 'revival of faith' in any narrow or orthodox sense. It does not imply belief in any particular creed or dogma, but it does assume that there is a system of values which is widely recognised and respected. Without a common system of values, no society can flourish, and in fact the individuals constituting it tend to languish. The Sanskrit term 'dharma' brings out this essential characteristic; it is that which binds or holds together the members of a community. In an earlier letter I have pointed out how the loss of sense of 'belonging' is responsible for youthful malad-

justment and discontent. Steps must, therefore, be taken to inculcate in the young a system of values that may claim their allegiance and bind them together as members of one community.

I am sure you will agree that this sense of common values must be based on respect for the individual. The whole democratic attitude has been built up on such respect. The individual is unique and uniqueness of the individual involves that every person in some respect or other differs from others. Toleration of, or one should rather say, respect for differences is thus an essential element of democracy. Such respect is based on the recognition that in spite of widespread differences in individual character and expression there are certain values which apply equally to all. Recognition of this fact is the basis on which we can consider the introduction of an ethical element in school and collegiate instruction without reference to any particular religion or creed.

Respect for the individual is in the end based on a recognition of the dignity of man. It is this faith which has enabled man to overcome the limitations of his physical weakness and the obstacles set on his path by the world outside. The whole course of human history is a record of the way in which man has triumphed over the baser elements in his nature and set before himself the urge for a fuller and freer life. The reason why India has survived in spite of poverty, hunger, disease and political vicissitudes is her faith in values which transcend the demands of our daily experience. She has valued the quest for truth regardless of differences in its manifestation. She has sought beauty in its deepest meaning. She has hungered for

the good of all mankind. *Satyam*, *Sundaram* and *Sivam* have thus been the principles that have governed India's destiny. Today, there is a special need to stress this point. Not only is the urge towards the creation of new values often absent in the younger generation, but it is at times lacking even in a proper awareness of the rich moral and spiritual heritage which has sustained India throughout her history.

Without entering into any discussion about the relation of religion and morality, we may still admit that the whole question of moral and spiritual education is linked up with the highly controversial issues of religious instruction. If religious education is interpreted to mean the teaching of the dogma or creed of any particular faith, the Indian Constitution prohibits the provision of such education in a State institution. The public schools and colleges of the country must, therefore, be non-denominational and can have no part in propagating any one of the numerous forms of belief regarding man and his relation to the supernatural world. In these circumstances, parents who are interested in a specific type of religious education for their children can provide such education by their own efforts or enrol their children in the separate religious schools permitted under the Constitution.

It is not difficult to understand why the Indian Constituent Assembly voted in favour of secularism in education. We have in this country people professing different faiths. A multi-religious State must pay equal regard to Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism or Judaism. Educational institutions cannot hope to provide adequate instruction in all these religions. To assign such a task

to them would be to ask for the impossible. Besides, an organised and institutionalised religion sometimes claims exclusive possession of the truth and there is a risk that the peaceful atmosphere of an educational institution may be disturbed if these controversies with regard to the truthful character of any particular religion and the erroneous character of the others are brought into juxtaposition within the school.

India is therefore, and rightly, a secular State. This does not however mean that she is indifferent to moral values. Such a suggestion would be against the age-old traditions of the country and the deeply religious nature of her people. A secular State does not require that all our activities shall be "profane" or that we shall cultivate no devotion to moral and spiritual ideals. On the contrary, the emphasis on the secular nature of the State demands a recognition of the spiritual values which are common to all faiths. Though the Constitution has not specified any one religion as *the* State religion, it has been inspired by a regard for all religions which is in consonance with the moral and religious strain that has run throughout our history. Whatever may be the position elsewhere, in India it has never been doubted that religion in the widest sense must inspire all education. The traditional systems of education have acted on the principle that a curriculum devoid of all ethical basis will prove barren in the end. In fact one of the main criticisms against the western system of education introduced in the last hundred and fifty years or so is that it is largely indifferent to religious values.

We may look at the question in another way. Religion is a part of life and it is but natural that

children will ask questions about it. A child may be moved by the majesty of Nature, or it may have seen something at home or outside which baffles it. Surely, no teacher should refuse to consider questions a child may ask. It is a distortion of the Constitution to suggest that the teacher should not deal with such questions simply and naturally and with proper regard for the religious susceptibility of the child. Respect for the feelings of the child will require the teacher to assume, if not feel, an attitude of reverence for different faiths and customs, and the emphasis on secularism is merely an expression of this need.

For the reasons given above no direct religious instruction can be provided in schools. The responsibility for developing moral and spiritual values in students thus acquires a special significance and should be properly understood. We may differ over religious creeds but we have to agree on the basic moral and spiritual values of man. Further, history has led to the evolution of a common standard of morality for all mankind. Customs and conventions vary, beliefs and habits change, but certain basic values of life—like regard for truth and beauty, fellow-feeling for all human beings and consideration for the weak and the unhappy—are common to all religions and cultures. Without these, no human society can survive.

The need for common moral principles has become even more imperative in the modern world. All societies exhibit an increasingly complex social structure where the welfare of each depends increasingly upon the co-operation of all. Further, different societies have been brought together in a way unknown to previous ages. No social invention, however, ingenious,

no enactment of statutes and ordinances, however, edifying, can produce a good and secure society in an age of reduced distances and accelerated national and international contacts if personal integrity, honesty and self-discipline are lacking.

In educational terms, this means that the development of moral and spiritual values is basic to all other educational objectives. Instruction uninspired by moral and religious values will be inadequate as a preparation for democratic citizenship. These moral and spiritual values have been sought to be codified again and again. Every attempt to do so is a prelude to a fresh attempt. If society were static, reformulation would perhaps be unnecessary. The dynamic and changing nature of life demands that these values be examined and revalued from time to time. A recent list catalogues the following values as among the most important for the modern world : respect for human personality, faith in moral responsibility, respect for common consent, devotion to truth, respect for excellence, moral equality, pursuit of the general welfare and spiritual enrichment. Such a list can of course never be exhaustive and in fact different persons will prepare different lists, but we may still use the present one as an illustration of what is intended.

Because societies change, values must be continually assessed and revalued. This does not mean that values necessarily change but that every effort must be made to see that the expressions of the basic values are consistent with the new demands of a new age. Some values have stood the test of time and become an intrinsic part of man's spiritual heritage. Others regarded as a value at one stage have in course of time

• been proved to be only a custom or convention which can be discarded without injury to faith. Such an effort to define values is itself an exercise in moral endeavour and would be most profitable if undertaken jointly by pupils and teachers.

At the beginning of the session, the staff of a school or college may every year hold a meeting and prepare a statement of values that should guide the work of the institution for the year. The statement must of course be reviewed from time to time. Once certain values have been accepted, the institution should bend all its energies to achieve the ideal in whatever is said or done within its four walls. This is implied in one of the recommendations of the Secondary Education Commission that the headmaster and staff should plan their work in such a way that the qualities of character and mind that they wish to inculcate are reflected in everything that is done in the school. The compositions pupils write, the speeches they make in the debating society, the pictures they paint, the maps they draw, the social activities they organise, the craft work they undertake should all be directed towards the achievement of these basic values.

It is hardly necessary to add that any statement of values prepared by the school should recognise that values are inter-related. Separate identification of values is valid only for the purpose of analysis. Again, the same school experience may, in fact, be relevant to the development of more than one value. There will also be cases where different values appear to be inconsistent with one another. This is of course where the real difficulty lies. There is usually no difference of opinion so long as a value is stated abstractly. Doubts arise

when we seek to realise that value in a specific instance and even more when there is a seeming clash between different values. In life, we rarely have the experience of a pure case. Each event has many facets and makes a claim on different aspects of our nature. The attempt to formulate our system of values, and perhaps arrange them in an order of priority is of special advantage in such a situation. It may provide a frame of reference which will enable the school authorities to give necessary guidance to the pupils so that the conflict can be resolved on the basis of accepted principles.

The central problem of moral instruction is that it is more a matter of practice than theory. It is not communicated by intellectual means alone but transmitted from one person to another by living human contacts. From this it follows that moral education cannot be the exclusive responsibility of the school or the college. The home, the community and in the modern world, media of mass-communication such as the press, the radio and the motion picture have an equal responsibility in shaping the character and personality of the youth. Recent studies have shown how important the pre-school years can be. During this period children are almost completely under the direction of the home. Research has also established the power and influence of the modern media of mass-communication. Undesirable films, vulgar advertisements and sensational journalism can and do permanently damage the character of adolescents.

The importance of the school need not be minimised but we must remember that a child who attends school spends hardly a fourth of his waking life in school. The importance of the forces constantly

impinging upon the character of the child outside the school must not in any way be underestimated. The development of character in the young is a joint responsibility of all social institutions and it is essential that they work together, even though the greatest responsibility may rest with the parents and the teachers.

I would, however, add that the school will still have a pre-eminent importance. The school deals with the most impressionable period of life. It serves a larger proportion of the total population than perhaps any other social agency. It is also the chief instrument set up exclusively for educational purposes. Further, its importance is in some ways out of all proportion to the time spent in school. Every parent knows the implicit faith of a child in the school teacher. The child accepts the teaching in school with a complete self-surrender that is in strange contrast with its questioning attitude to the rest of society. The school must, therefore, take very direct responsibility for moral and spiritual education. Apart from its direct responsibility the school can be legitimately expected to secure the co-operation of the other agencies in developing a sense of values among the young.

In my next letter I shall try to offer some specific suggestions for the moral and spiritual development of pupils in schools and colleges.

Yours sincerely,
Humayun Kabir

NEW DELHI,
16th December, 1955.

MY DEAR MINISTER,

I am sorry I could not follow up my last letter to you as quickly as I could have wished. I had then said that I would make a few suggestions as to how educational institutions can directly contribute to the development of a moral sense among the pupils. I need hardly say that the moral and spiritual needs of the young, or indeed of anyone, cannot be met by merely a series of lessons or even by a special course organised for the purpose. Knowledge about right conduct is certainly desirable and necessary, but unfortunately such knowledge does not by itself always lead to right conduct. In fact it has even been doubted if it increases materially the predisposition to right conduct. We have all come across cases of learned men who in spite of their knowledge of the right act wrongly. The whole science—if science it can be called—of casuistry is evidence of the difference between right knowledge and right conduct.

It may appear a truism but the fact is that as in other spheres, here also example is better than precept. In fact one might say that in the field of moral feeling and action, example alone matters. Values develop naturally out of the total experience of a pupil. If the school is to be a force for morality, its impact must arise out of all phases of the life of the school. It is thus far more important to organise the activities of the school in a way which will keep moral values conti-

nually before the pupils than to set apart separate hours for formal teaching of morality. We all know people who—even though they never talk to us of morality—teach us all the time through their life and conduct. Similarly, the best schools are those where the teachers by their example create an atmosphere of regard and consideration for others and a sense of loyalty to the basic values of life.

It is specially necessary to stress this point in our country. India is pledged to be a secular democratic State and as such, formal teaching of any particular religious dogma would be out of place in our schools. Since moral courses are usually associated in the public mind with the teaching of a particular religion, teachers generally like to avoid any formal instruction in any particular code of ethics. Critics of our schools often get hold of this fact and say that since the school programme provides no special hours for instruction in ethics or moral teaching, the schools are doing nothing or next to nothing in the moral training of the pupils. From this it is an easy step to say that the schools are doing nothing in character building of the younger generations.

Every school teacher worth his salt repudiates, and ought to repudiate, such criticism. He holds, and should hold that though no hours may be set apart for formal instruction in ethics, the school if it is a real school, inculcates moral values in the young through all its activities. In Dewey's picturesque phrase, "The schools teach them every moment of the day, and five days in the week." If the teachers fail to instil in the pupils a sense of moral values, it is not because special periods are not set apart for what after all can be only

knowledge about morals, but because their own character or the school atmosphere and ideals or their methods of teaching or the subject matter which they teach are not such as to bring intellectual recognition into vital union with character.

One may here point to a very common confusion between moral teaching and teaching of morality. Just as teaching of hygiene does not necessarily make a man healthy nor knowledge of monetary theory make him rich, knowledge of moral ideas does not necessarily make a man moral. Morality is essentially an attitude of the mind in which values are placed above self-interest. This attitude can be developed only through contact with men who have made it part of their being. This makes it clear that the greatest duty of a teacher—no matter what his special subject may be—lies in the sphere of moral and spiritual education of his pupils. I have said earlier that teachers may at times try to play for safety by avoiding references to moral and spiritual values because of the danger of arousing religious differences. The truth of the matter, however, is that the fundamental principles of ethics have a universality which cuts across all religious differences and can be taught without referring to the dogma of any creed.

Some people say that moral and spiritual values may be neglected by a teacher because of his complete absorption in his subject. I do not think this is ever likely to happen. Where the teacher is fully devoted to his studies, he may employ all his available time and conscious effort in mastering the subjects of the school curriculum, but in doing so, he will be indirectly developing in the pupils the moral and spiritual values of devotion to truth for its own sake. It cannot be too

often said that it is not what the teacher says or tries to teach but the way in which he lives his life that will have the greatest impact on the young who come into contact with him. Conflicts arise because the teachers are slack and often allow worldly considerations to take precedence over their duty to their pupils.

Even at the risk of repetition one has to insist that the living example of the teacher is the most important factor in developing a sense of values among his pupils. The teacher must never forget that the keen eyes of his pupils are constantly watching him. He may think that he examines them at regular intervals, but the fact is that they are examining him every hour and every day throughout the year. The standards he sets, the actions he approves, the manner in which he handles his subject, his personal relations with his pupils, the way he behaves in the class-room and outside are all being watched constantly and one may add almost mercilessly. Older men know that no human being is perfect and hence it would be unfair to demand perfection of the teacher. Children are, however, much more exacting in their demands and are much more likely to condemn whatever they regard as a failing in their teacher. This among other factors demands that we must create conditions in which a fair proportion of the best and the ablest in each generation is attracted to the teaching profession. If this is not done, there is the certainty that in each succeeding generation the standards of scholarship and character will steadily go down till the community is faced with grave moral and intellectual crises.

In the special predicament in which the teacher finds himself, it is not only safe but perhaps necessary

for the teacher to acknowledge his fault frankly whenever a lapse occurs. Such acknowledgement would itself be an education for the pupils. It would give them a feeling of kinship with the teacher and make them realise that like them he also has his limitations. It would teach them that if the teacher goes on trying to do the right in spite of occasional lapses, they also should do the same. There is, however, a crucial limit below which the teacher cannot go. If his lapses are too many or his character fails to arouse and retain the respect of his pupils, his attempts at establishing a comradeship with them will only provoke their ridicule and contempt. All this only serves to emphasise what has in a sense been the burden of all these letters : the ultimate success of any programme of education, whether in the field of theoretical learning or in the development of moral and spiritual values, must ultimately depend on the personality of the teacher.

A sense of moral values is best developed during the impressionable years of adolescence. This is the time when there is a tremendous expansion of energy and feelings in the young. The onset of puberty brings about changes in body and mind which seek for release in identification in something greater than the individual self. If this expansion of physical, mental and emotional energy is not properly utilised by harnessing them to a set of ideals, there is a danger that adolescents may go astray. This is also a period when the young are in special need of care and affection. They begin to feel themselves as individuals and sometimes form exaggerated ideas of their own importance. If neglected or ignored, they suffer from moods of depression and at times even rush to the conclusion that nobody cares for them. Adolescence is thus a

period of emotional and mental instability. Unless carefully handled, this instability may express itself in many different forms from minor maladjustments in personality to grave disequilibria in society.

I know that I am making great demands on our teachers. This to my mind is inescapable, for the next generation will largely be what the teachers are today. It will also undoubtedly require some reorientation in our ideas of both their recruitment and training. To be successful a school teacher must be able, but even more important is his attitude towards the profession of teaching. He must have a regard for the personality of the pupils placed in his charge and must thus be a person endowed with intellect, imagination and most important of all sympathy with the young. His training must place as great an emphasis on the development of the emotional side of his nature as in increasing his technical efficiency in the profession. The teacher training institutions must, therefore, provide opportunities for the teaching of values both through their curricula and their general atmosphere. Character along with scholarship and teaching skill must be considered in the selection of candidates for training and must be an overriding consideration when teachers are appointed. Both during the period of their training and thereafter, opportunities must be given for developing in the teachers the habit of co-operative action and learning consideration for others through extra-curricular activities as well as in-service workshops and other developmental programmes.

In the development of moral and spiritual values, the spirit in which the school is run is second only to the personal influence of the teacher. The two are not

of course different and still less opposed to one another. The spirit of the school will depend upon the character and personality of the teacher and vice versa. Their cumulative effect will be best felt in a school where the headmaster and the teachers work in a spirit of equality and comradeship. A school which relies too much on the centralised authority of the headmaster may develop undesirable traits that will retard the flowering of the children's personality. In all authoritarian systems, there is a risk that the members may degenerate into bullies who cringe before a superior authority but find compensation in extorting obedience from those placed below them. We must be specially careful that even the suspicion of such a development may not arise in the case of our schools.

Schools which over-emphasise rivalry or competition as the mainspring of effort may again give a wrong orientation to conduct of both teachers and pupils. The anxiety to succeed may lead to deviations—at first small but increasingly serious—from the strictest standards of honesty and fair play in their day-to-day work. Such a development will at first dull and then undermine the moral sense of the teachers and the pupils. A school charged with intolerance, fear, suspicion and selfishness will corrode the minds of teachers and pupils alike. It is only institutions where the teachers are sensitive and responsive to moral considerations and where a deep respect for the personality of the child pervades the atmosphere that will afford opportunities to the young to develop in a normal and healthy manner. In such a school, boys and girls will have to co-operate with one another and with their teachers in the completion of their assignments. They will help to formulate the plans and execute them and

thus experience success and failure in work of their own choice. Tagore and Gandhi are perhaps the two greatest educationists of India in the last hundred years. They differed on many other points but they were completely at one in their view that within the school, there must be perfect self-government for the pupils. They knew from their insight and experience that then alone can pupils have a proper chance of moral and spiritual self-fulfilment.

In my next letter, which will be the last in the series, I propose to develop this point in somewhat greater detail.

Yours sincerely,
Humayun Kabir

CAMP : CALCUTTA,
13th February, 1956.

MY DEAR MINISTER,

In my last letter I had said that I would offer some more comments on the need of self-government within the school. I may put the same thing in another way and say that since morality is based on the recognition of individual responsibility, there can be no development of the moral sense unless the individuals have frequent and adequate opportunities to exercise initiative and choice. A school can develop the moral sense of its pupils only if the pupils have the chance to take decisions on their own and face the consequences. Since they will in any case have to take such decisions when they grow up, it is far better that they first learn to bear responsibility within the comparative security of the school.

Submission and obedience are certainly of value in human affairs but if they are exalted at the cost of other values, as for example in the case of a certain type of military discipline, the results are harmful to society. Habits of obedience may be inculcated by repeated exercises or series of lessons, but mere habitual discipline does not suffice even within the military sphere. Successful generals have been those who have combined submission and obedience with initiative and daring when the occasion demands. One of the lessons in all clashes between dictatorships and democracies throughout history has been that while the initial advantage has been with the dictatorship, the

ultimate victory has almost invariably gone to the democracies. We must, therefore, ensure that from childhood onward, the young pupil is taught to regard himself as increasingly a free and responsible member of the community who is answerable to his own conscience for all his actions.

Just as it is easier to organise special lessons or courses in morality than to ensure that the entire atmosphere of the school is permeated by a moral tone, it is easier to mark out a few special activities where the pupils are given a measure of freedom than to transform the school into a democratic community. Nevertheless even the demarcation of a few such spheres is of great value in developing a democratic spirit in the school. Exercise of freedom and initiative in a few chosen activities develops the character and personality of the pupils and increases mutual confidence among teachers and the taught. As the pupils gradually learn that rights carry with them corresponding obligations, they begin to appreciate the reasons which influence their teachers and guardians in their actions. Conversely, as the teachers and the guardians see that pupils placed in positions of authority gradually develop feelings of respect and consideration for others, they tend to trust the pupils and offer them increasing responsibility. Like freedom, democracy also broadens from precedent to precedent, and there can be no better beginning for democracy than in a school community.

The greatest emphasis must, therefore, be placed on the creation of a proper moral and spiritual atmosphere in the school. There is, however, a risk that in the name of such an atmosphere, nothing positive may

be done for the teaching of moral values. What I have said above about democracy should be the corrective to such a risk. The spirit of democracy grows by the exercise of democracy. The school can develop a moral tone only if the specific activities and programmes are guided by spiritual and moral values and directed towards their assimilation in the daily life of the pupils. It is thus obvious that an indifferent or opportunistic attitude to moral values cannot create the necessary spiritual atmosphere in a school. There should be neither a merely literal instruction of certain dogmas nor should there be any reluctance to refer to moral values whenever the occasion demands.

The only way to teach moral and spiritual values is to weave them into the entire life of the school. Where a society is simple and the pattern of life follows one uniform course, it is comparatively easier to suggest methods for teaching the values needed by such a society. In the modern world, the close contacts between different types of ideals and social standards have made the task of inculcating a set of democratic values one of both greater urgency and greater difficulty. The modern world demands complex and intricate loyalties from its citizens. Its sense of values has to accommodate the conflicting claims of different ideologies and different social needs. Young men and women in such a world have both greater opportunities and greater obligations. Simultaneously, many of the institutions which formerly catered to the proper growth of the individual have either decayed or become less effective. Religious institutions no longer command the devotion which they did in past ages. Even the family ties have loosened greatly. Today the individual often makes claims for himself which were

inconceivable even a hundred years ago. In this fast changing and contracting world, the schools are being called to take upon themselves many functions which formerly belonged to the Church, the family or the State. The youth of a modern democracy are, therefore, increasingly what the schools make them. The responsibility of the schools has thus increased in direct proportion to the growth of democracy in different parts of the world.

Greater emphasis on the personal example of the teacher should not, however, be interpreted to mean that we should not learn from the accumulated experience of the past. Examples are certainly valuable but after all the resources in a school are comparatively limited. The accumulated experience of generations is on the other hand a limitless reservoir from which we can draw the most valuable lessons for morality.

We must, however, remember that all generalisations from past experience should be related to the experience of the learner himself. Neither direct instruction nor individual experience is by itself fully effective. Their judicious combination can alone offer an intelligent teacher the means to develop in his pupils a proper sense of values. This necessarily demands that the teacher himself must have a clear idea of what these values are. If he has a firm grasp on them, he can provide his pupils with opportunities of expressing in action and experience what they have learnt through precept or example. In such a context, discussions on morality among pupils and the formulation of principles under the guidance of the teachers can help in making intellectual recognition of values an essential ingredient in their personal life.

In my last letter, I had suggested that it may be desirable to select certain moral and spiritual values for special emphasis at certain periods of the pupil's life and use them as guiding principles for learning and other activities at school. I had also suggested that these values may be clearly stated and regularly reviewed by the headmasters and other teachers at stipulated intervals. Such reviews should take into consideration both the normal activities of the school as well as of any breach of discipline or other lapse on the part of one or more students. In fact, such lapses may provide opportunities to the staff to discuss the matter among themselves, diagnose the causes and suggest proper remedies. The primary role in all these, at least at the school stage, must be played by teachers but it may be of very great educative value to associate pupils in such discussions to the extent to which their general level of maturity and understanding permits.

I have earlier hinted at the way in which regular studies in the classroom can contribute to the development of moral values among pupils. Quite naturally such organised studies must absorb the largest part of the teacher's attention and time. If moral and spiritual values are to be taught through the total school experience, it is a primary responsibility of the teacher to use regular subjects of the curriculum to promote an appreciation of values and develop the character. Every subject provides the teacher, according to his ingenuity and wisdom, with a rich field for moral and spiritual exploration. Mathematics and science are often supposed to be a-moral, but the disregard of all personal interests and the devotion to exactitude, truth and objectivity which inspire these studies are of the greatest spiritual import. Popular

thought associates two subjects in particular with moral and spiritual implications and a wise teacher will use them to the fullest extent. These are literature and social studies. They deal with human beings, and their feelings and thoughts, hopes and aspirations, motives and relationships. They thus provide abundant opportunities for inculcating in the young not only a feeling for the interests and skills that are being taught but also for the basic ideals which have moved mankind through the ages. In fact, in teaching literature and social studies, the teachers are all the time passing moral judgments. It is perhaps better that they should do so consciously rather than unconsciously.

Situations in literature and history demand solutions to problems, interpretations of motives, weighing of consequences, making of comparisons and finally judgments on character and events. These opportunities should be used as extensively as possible in developing moral curiosity among pupils and teaching them the supremacy of the right and the good over narrower considerations. There is unfortunately at times a tendency for teachers to be concerned merely with the facts and thus confine their questions to "who," "what" and "when" of their subject matter. Such an approach may give information but deprives pupils of legitimate opportunities of personal and social growth. A wise teacher will, therefore, devote his attention and interest also to questions which concern the "how," the "why" and the "wherefore" of events and situations in history and literature.

Asking of such questions of value will have another most salutary effect on the whole atmosphere of the school. There is too often a dichotomy between the

content of textbooks and the content of out-of-school life. This is one reason why pupils do not necessarily become healthy through the teaching of hygiene nor moral through that of morals. Every effort should, therefore, be made to correlate the subject matter of school studies with the life of students outside the school. This will not only make the instruction more concrete and real but help in the development of moral and spiritual values among the pupils. A wide-awake teacher will try to bridge the gap between theory and practice by borrowing illustrations from the experience of pupils outside the school and by relating them to matters taught inside the classroom. If history and literature are taught as concrete instances of human conduct in which real men and women have faced real situations of moral difficulty, the subject matter will become real and interesting to the pupils and simultaneously develop in them a keener perception of the abiding values of life.

In all that I have said above, I have proceeded on the assumption that moral instruction is most effective when it is taught through example or conveyed indirectly. There may, however, be occasions, and this applies to both very young children as well as adolescents, when direct instruction may be not only profitable but necessary. If a class has not learnt courtesy either through the example of the teacher or through the normal methods of indirect instruction, direct teaching through definite codes of conduct or modes of behaviour may have to be utilised. Similarly, if there is a serious lapse on the part of a student or a class, it may and perhaps must provide an opportunity for direct moral instruction. While it is true that the essence of morality is a certain spirit and attitude, one

must also concede that at least a minimum standard of behaviour has to be enforced if society is to function satisfactorily. Virtue is a positive quality which cannot be commanded, but at least the absence of vice may within limits be enforced through regulations and outward restrictions.

In one of my earlier letters I cited the example of certain schools and colleges which have an Assembly of all teachers and pupils every day. I believe that such Assembly at the commencement of the daily work is useful not only for developing a sense of comradeship and fellow-feeling among members of the institution but may also help in the moral and spiritual development of the children if a general non-denominational prayer is offered at each session. It will help to develop in the children a feeling of respect for all religions if select passages from the scriptures of different faiths are read on such occasions. Similar readings from the great literature of different countries will foster respect for different nationalities and induce in pupils a spirit of toleration by impressing on them the basic unity of human character and ideals in spite of the many outward differences which characterise different peoples. Even at the University level, such Assembly with a universal prayer or a brief period of silent meditation may well help to develop the sense of individual and social integrity of its members.

Apart from the study of literature and the social sciences, schools should also organise talks and addresses by suitable persons on the lives of great personalities of history. In such talks, special emphasis may be placed on two values *viz.*, consideration for others and fellow-feeling for all human beings. Fami-

liarity with the lives of great men will develop in the children a spirit of charity, compassion and understanding and both directly and indirectly strengthen their character.

The selection of suitable books is of the greatest importance in the life of a pupil. They must be characterised by the broad human qualities to which reference has already been made. Even books on arithmetic or algebra can, in their examples or problems, contain elements which may create or confirm prejudices in the mind of children. The need for scrupulous care in the selection of books for literary studies is even more urgent. Such books of literature must from the nature of the case be graded in the earlier stages. Books prescribed should not in my view teach morality directly but bring before the children stories of the lives of the great religious reformers like the Buddha, Confucius, Zoroaster, Socrates, Jesus and Mohammad. There should also be stories from the lives of great sons and reformers in India and elsewhere. Many of the simple poems of Kabir or Nanak or the sayings of Gandhi or Tagore could easily form texts which the children may be asked to commit to memory. In higher classes of the school, there should be a more intimate study of the lives of men and women of faith and devotion. There is at present too often a tendency to concentrate on the lives of military heroes alone. This has not only a narrowing influence on the mind of the child but very often develops in him a wrong sense of values. Some of the great fighters for freedom on the battlefield should certainly be honoured but this ought to be for their services to the cause of human liberty. Much more attention should, however, be paid to the lives and teachings of literary men, social reformers, philo-

sophers and scientists than has been done till now. Simultaneously, it should be brought vividly before the young learners that the contribution to human happiness of these lovers of peace is more far-reaching and permanent.

Students at the University stage should, as a part of their compulsory general studies, become familiar with selections of a universalist character from the great scriptures of the world. In addition, they should study some of the great writings of all ages and all peoples for their literary value as well as their insight into human character and their spirit of compassion and sympathy for human suffering as well as man's efforts to raise the standard of life for all. For those who are specially interested in such problems, it would be desirable to institute courses in the study of comparative religions and religious philosophy. Everyone who goes through a university should in any case have some acquaintance with the basic teachings of the great religions and appreciate the fundamental unity of the human spirit in its aspiration for truth. It may be a superstition to think that by merely teaching the dogmas of religions adolescents can be made pious and moral, but there can be no denying that their hearts are uplifted and their vision ennobled by living contact with the essence of religion which is to live for God, for humanity, for one's country, for one's neighbours and for oneself only in the context of these wider loyalties.

Before I conclude, I would only like to add that I have purposely refrained from saying anything in this series of letters as to what the State and the community can and ought to do in improving the general atmos-

phere in schools. The school is an integral part of society. It is thus quite obvious that no permanent and far-reaching improvement within the school is possible without a corresponding improvement in society in general. The school is influenced by and in its turn influences society. I have purposely confined my remarks to the various ways in which the school can start a process of regeneration which will in course of time affect the community at large. The success of such an endeavour, I need hardly say, will demand full co-operation from parents and guardians and in fact from all who are interested in the welfare of the future citizens of the country.

Yours sincerely,
Humayun Kabir

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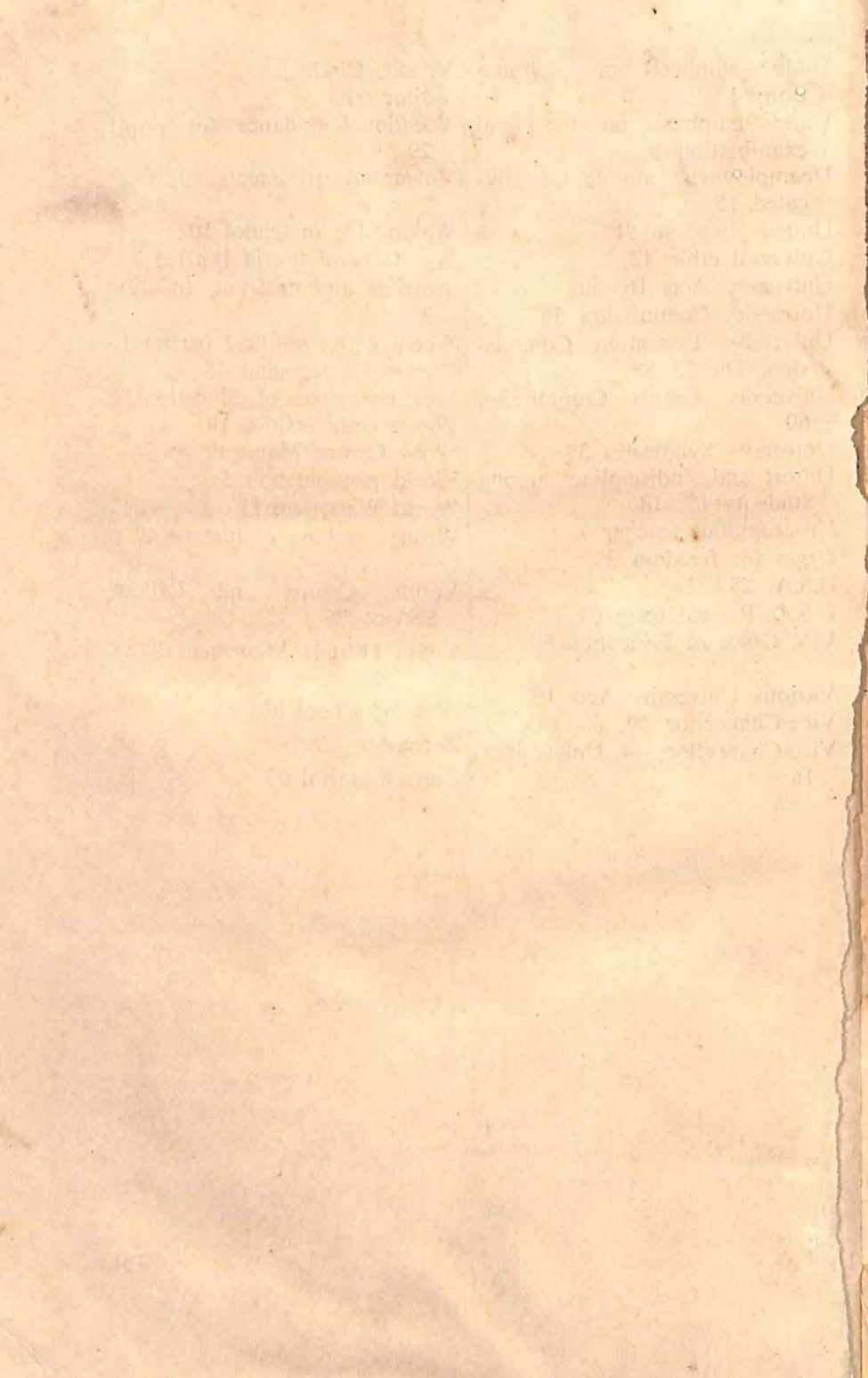
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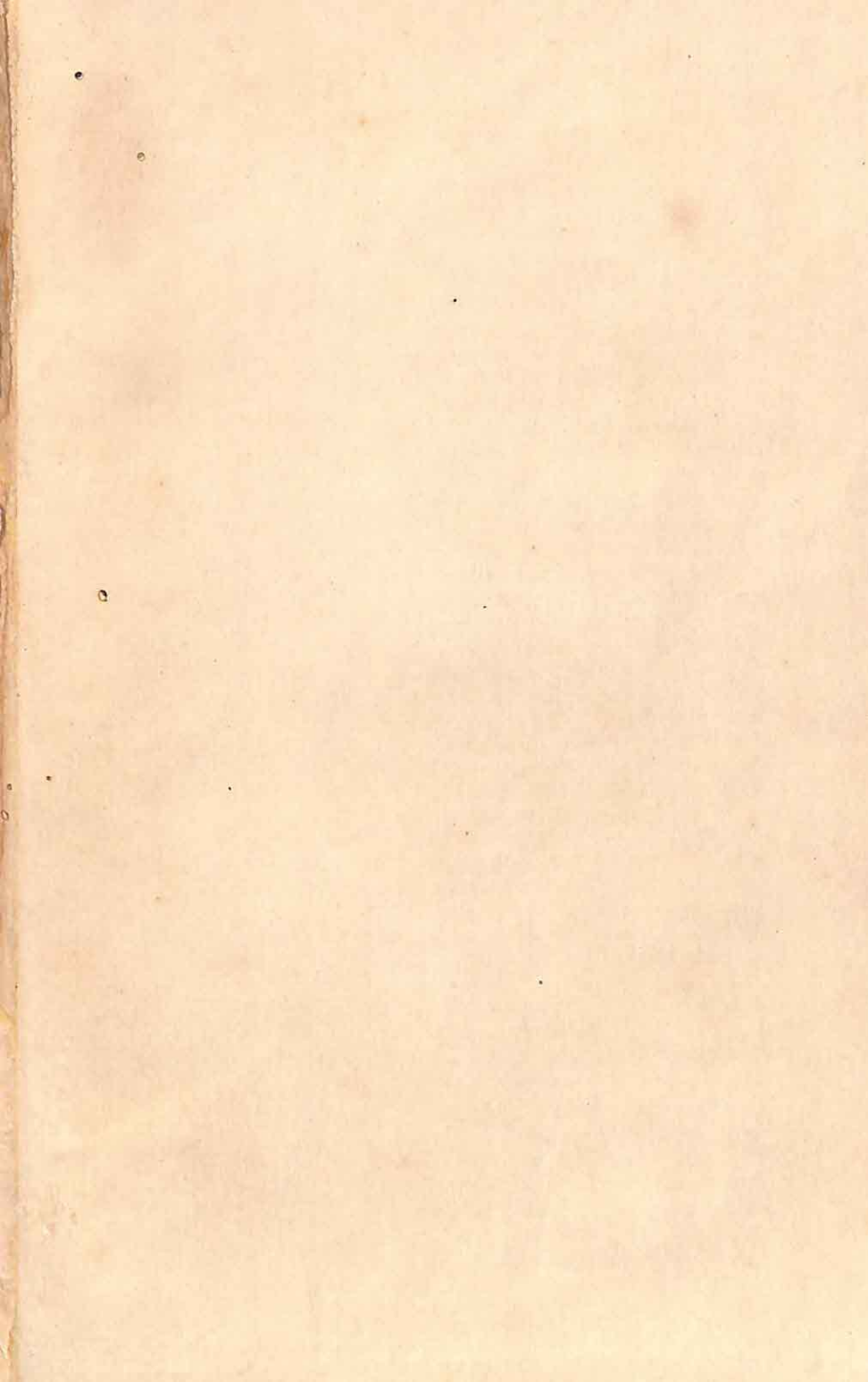
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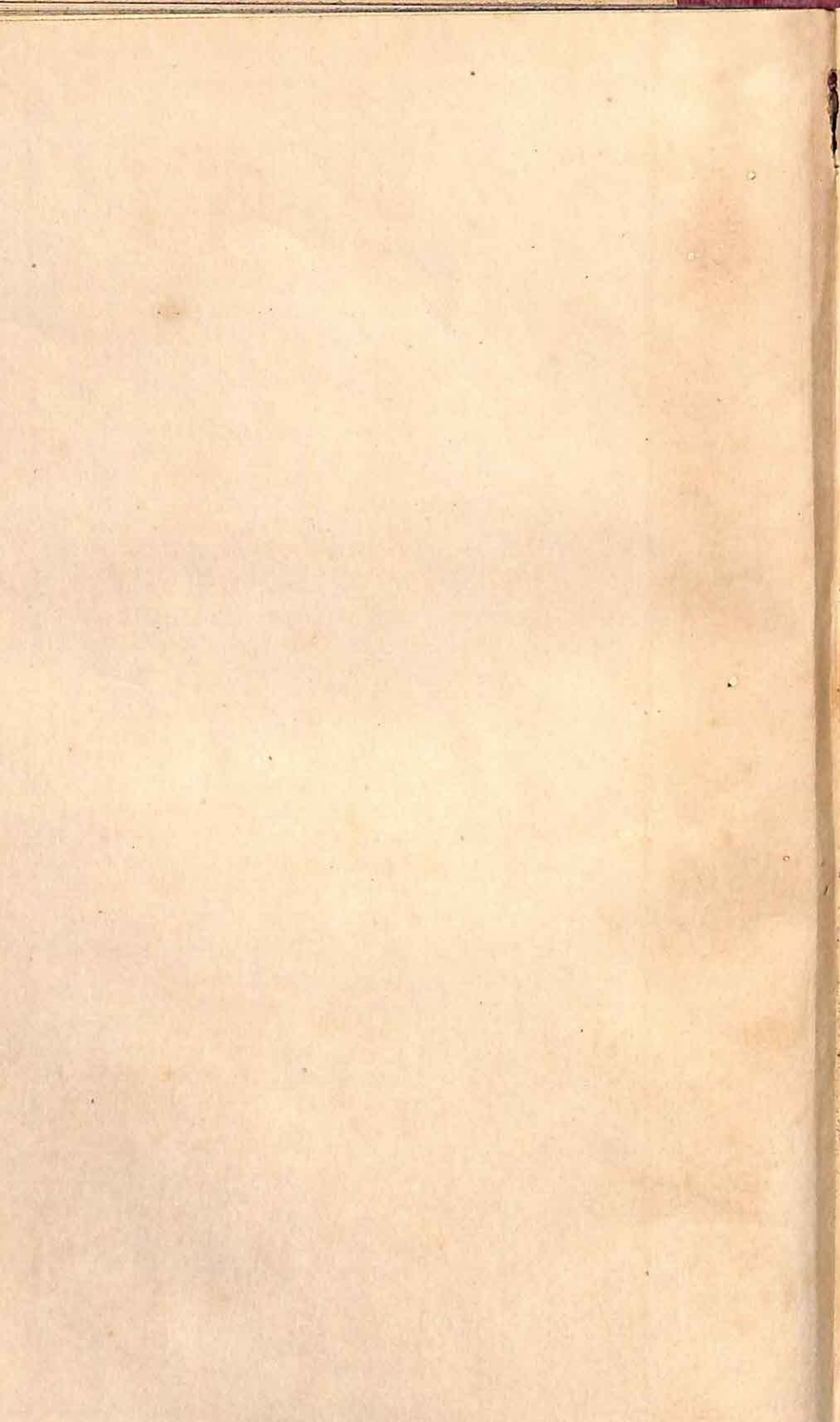
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